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BY

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AND

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FROM THE WRITINGS

OF

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY.

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Invenies etiam disjecti membra poetæ.

HORACE.

The perception of analogies — the exercise of that powerful abstraction which seizes the point of agreement in a number of otherwise dissimilar individuals — it is in this that the greatest genius is shown. — BISHOP COPLESTON.

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INTRODUCTION.

In presenting to the Public a collection of Thoughts and Apophthegms from the writings of Archbishop Whately, the Compiler would desire to remind the Reader, that the Author, from whose works this selection is made, is not one of those fragmentary writers who deal in insulated passages of wisdom and of wit, and resemble, as has been remarked, "Chinese painters, who represent each single object admirably, but have no perspective." His works, on the contrary, are all complete treatises, of which any short extracts can be but the mere shreds and parings; and consequently, it is only too obvious, that as an exposition of his views, this, or any, collection of detached passages, must necessarily be somewhat imperfect. Yet these treatises, though all specimens of close and consecutive reasonings are so rich in comprehensive and suggestive maxims, in calm and lucid statements of great principles, and in the varied illustration of them by familiar examples, that the Compiler cannot but anticipate a favourable reception for a selection the design of which is to present in a small compass, and

thus render more generally accessible, some of those pregnant principles and suggestive thoughts. Indeed, the Compiler cannot but feel, that whatever apology may be required for the work, is due not to the Public, but to the Author, whose thoughts, presented in this detached form, must be more or less injuriously affected by separation from the context.

This needed apology is now respectfully offered to him, together with grateful thanks for the characteristic liberality with which permission to make a selection from his writings has been accorded. As the Author has no connection with the publication, or even knowledge of the mode in which his permission has been made use of, the Compiler is alone responsible for all beyond that permission.

It remains only to add, that the miscellaneous thoughts on a very great variety of subjects, part of which has been devoted to that most important of all subjects, the "Love of Truth in Religious Inquiry;" and the passages bearing upon it, have been selected in very earnest hope that some of them might serve, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, to implant the precious germs of that desire for truth, for its own sake, which gives singleness of eye to perceive, and singleness of purpose to pursue it.

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THOUGHTS AND APOPHTHEGMS

ON THE

LOVE OF TRUTH IN RELIGIOUS INQUIRY.

Truth,

THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTIC OF CHRISTIANITY.

The question, "What is true?" ought to stand on the threshold of every religious enquiry.

If the question, "What is true," be asked only in the second place, it is likely to receive a very different answer from what it would, if it had been asked in the first place.

That what is true and right loses, incalculably, its beneficial effect on the mind, when received on any ground than *because* it is true and right.

Truth is, in such an especial manner, the characteristic of the religion of Christ, that, in our Lord's reply to Pilate, He points it out as defining the very nature of His kingdom, of His objects, and his claims: — "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." And

when, on other occasions, asserting His claims, He says, "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." — "When the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." — "Sanctify them through thy Truth; thy word is Truth." Thus, too, the Apostles repeatedly use the words "Truth" and "Faith" to designate the Christian religion. It is Truth resting on evidence, and requiring Faith in it, on the ground of its truth.

The Christian religion made its appearance as the common disturber of the peace of the world, because it put an end to the tranquil influence of custom, authority, credulity, sentiment, and imagination; forced men upon the disagreeable task of examining evidence, searching records, and proving all things; and arrayed in opposite opinions, children against their parents, subjects against their princes, and the people against the priest.

Christianity, contrasted with the Jewish system of emblems, is Truth in the sense of reality, as substance is opposed to shadows; and, contrasted with the Heathen Mythology, is Truth as opposed to falsehood. "The truth as it is in Jesus" was to supersede the heathen idolatry, by destroying it; and "the Law and the Prophets," not by destroying, indeed, but by fulfilling them.

The Heathen Mythology not only was not true, but was not even supported as true; it not only *deserved* no faith, but it *demanded* none. The very pretension to truth — the very demand of faith — were characteristic distinctions of Christianity.

To believe in Christianity, without knowing why we believe it, is not Christian faith, but blind credulity.

The word knowledge, strictly employed, implies three things; viz., Truth, Proof, and Conviction.

To say that there is the more virtue in Christian Faith, the less it is founded on evidence, is to forget that the Lord Jesus Himself — He who "taught as one having authority and not as the Scribes" — He who said not, as the Prophets of old, men *sent* from God, "Thus saith the Lord" — but, as Immanuel, God dwelling with His people, "*I* say unto you," — appealed to His works as bearing witness of Him; and claimed the Divine "power to forgive sins," on the ground that He had the no less Divine power to bid the palsied cripple "take up his bed and walk."

The Apostles came forward rather in the character of witnesses, than as authoritative guides; and they work miracles and appeal to Scripture, not so much for the purpose of establishing their own right to deliver doctrines, as to *prove* the doctrines which they teach. And as with their first teaching, so also is it with the subsequent propagation of their religion. Though the Authors of the Gospels wrote, under the extraordinary superintendence of the Holy Spirit, those four distinct statements of evidence of matters of fact, yet it is not as the organs of inspiration they come forward. Their language is not, "Thus saith the Lord;" but, "He that *saw* it bare record." These things were "delivered unto us by those who, from the beginning, were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." They have so shaped their writings as to avoid what the method of authority would require, and force

forward what the method of examination would demand; and have thus shown pretty clearly their intention, that the religion which they preached upon the ground of evidence, should be maintained and propagated also upon the same ground. "These things"—says the Evangelist John, speaking of Christ's miracles, wrought in the presence of His disciples — "were written that ye might believe . . . and . . . believing ye might have life through His name."

It has been said by a modern writer, "that "the poor ignorant uninstructed peasant who says, 'I believe my religion because I have been told so by those who are wiser and better than myself; my parents told me so, and the clergyman of the parish told me so,' *comes nearest to the answer of the Gospel,*" to that answer which the apostle Peter directs us to be ready to give "to every one that asketh a reason for the hope that is in us." And yet it is manifest this answer could have been given, when the Gospel was first preached, by no *Christian;* but might be, and *was*, given by every one of his Pagan neighbours.

This is to represent the Apostles of Christ as saying to those of whom they would make converts, "Let every succeeding generation receive quietly the religion handed down by its fathers, but let *this* generation act otherwise. Take up *novelty* for this once to oblige us, and ever after adhere to antiquity."

He who professes adherence to the national religion of England, on the ground that "it is the religion of his fathers," forgets, as do the hearers who applauded the sentiment, that, on this principle, the worship of Thor and Woden would claim precedence.

In these our days, there are an immense number of persons, who, professing faith in the Gospel, and zeal for its support, yet assure us that enquiries into its evidences are likely to lead to infidelity. What would such a person say of some professed friend coming forward as his advocate, and saying, "My friend here, is a veracious and worthy man, and there is no foundation for any of the charges brought against him; and his integrity is fully believed in by persons who thoroughly trust him, and who have never thought of reason or enquiring about his character at all; but, of all things, *do not make any investigation*, for the more you enquire and examine, the less likely most people will be to believe in his integrity!" Surely a man so defended would exclaim, "Deliver me from my friends, and I fear not my enemies."

Those who boldly stand out and court enquiry, and bring forward cogent reason for their conviction, are reproached, by a certain modern writer, with infirm faith and timidity. Timidity of all things! One is reminded of the story of some Indian savages serving as allies to the British in America, who, when the allied force was attacked by the enemy, ran and took shelter in the woods, while the British troops stood firm under a heavy fire, and repulsed the assailants. It was expected that their Indian friends would have been full of admiration at this display of superior valour; but, on the contrary, their interpretation of it was, that the British soldiers were such cowards that they were *too much frightened to run away*. Almost every chapter of the New Testament convicts the Lord Jesus and His followers of that "timidity," in appealing to the evidence of miracles and prophecies, which is censured and derided.

The danger of decrying all appeal to evidence is not confined to a mere want of adequate evidence for the truth of the Christian religion, but something distinct from, and beyond, this; the danger, namely, of a contrary presumption arising. It is not merely, that men, to whom sufficient evidence has not been furnished, will be likely, themselves, to reject what has not been proved to them; but that men of *all* classes—the learned as well as the unlearned—will be likely to regard it as a positive evidence against the religion, that it professes to be calculated for mankind in general, and designed to claim their rational belief, while its defenders themselves confess that the object cannot be accomplished.

To labour to prove a truth, is to imply the possibility of doubt, and to challenge enquiry; therefore an appeal to truth, as resting on evidence, is the characteristic of a true religion, which alone can satisfy doubts, or stand the test of enquiry.

The kingdom of truth the Lord came to establish, is a kingdom whose subjects should have been *admitted as such*, in consequence of their being "of the truth;" that is, not mere adherents of truth by accident, but *votaries* of truth. "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice."

He only is "of the truth" who, with reverential love, is seeking, in candour and simplicity, to learn God's truth, and, in earnest self-devotion, to obey it at all seeming hazards; after the example of Him who "came into the world to bear witness unto the truth."

SOME OBSTACLES TO THE ATTAINMENT OF TRUTH, AND TO ITS PROGRESS IN THE WORLD.

I. Indifference about Truth.

What is the Truth? is the question to which all other questions should be postponed.

All men wish to have truth on their side; but few to be on the side of truth.

Some men, from supposing themselves to have *found* truth, take for granted that it was for truth they *were* seeking.

Men miss truth more often from their indifference about it, than from intellectual incapacity.

Many a man adduces on some subjects puerile fallacies, that are, perhaps, in reality no more *his own* than the sound arguments he employs on others; he has given an indolent, unthinking acquiescence to each, and has suffered his powers of thought to lie dormant, which, if he could be excited to exert, would be fully sufficient to enable him to distinguish the sound from the unsound.

There is a heresy of Indifference to revealed religion which is the most deadly of all heresies.

Some of the articles of belief, of the heresy of Indifference,

are too readily and generally received — "all religions are true, and all equally true,"—"all religions profess to furnish revelations respecting the Deity and the world to come," — "all religions have their Priest and their Priestcraft," — "all religions teach piety towards some Divine Being, and inculcate moral conduct." And this creed is wound up with —

> "For modes of faith, let senseless bigots fight;
> He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

And yet, in every one of the points, in respect of which all religions will have been thus indiscriminately thrown together, the patient and diligent enquirer will perceive that Christianity does, in fact, stand eminently distinguished from all the rest. It bears only that superficial and general resemblance to them, which a genuine coin does to its various counterfeits.

The depreciation of Christianity by Indifferentism is a more insidious and less curable evil than infidelity itself. For he who denies the whole of it, but who yet acknowledges the importance, if true, of what he rejects, may, at least, be brought to attend to the arguments in favour of it: but far less corrigible is the error of him, who, confounding Christianity with all the systems which human fraud or folly has devised, or, at best, regarding it as a mere authoritative confirmation of Natural Religion, looks upon the whole system with indifference, as a thing needed, perhaps, for the vulgar, but which the educated and intelligent might very well have dispensed with, and about which they need not much concern themselves.

The study of Natural Religion ought properly to follow, or at least to accompany, not to precede, that of Revelation.

The Gospel has exercised a powerful, though an unacknowledged, and, perhaps, an unperceived, influence, even on the minds of those who reject it; they have drunk at that stream of knowledge, which they cannot, or will not, trace up to the real source from which it flows.

To dress up a system with the spoils of revelation, to call it Natural Religion, and then to make it a standard by which to interpret the declarations of Scripture, is, in fact, to correct an original, from an incorrect and imperfect transcript.

To attribute to Natural Religion what Revelation alone can furnish, is to confound Christianity with the various systems of philosophical speculation or popular superstition, in careless blindness to the splendid characteristics which distinguish it from them all. The star which stands over the holy Infant at Bethlehem has no fellow in the firmament.

If the Jews be justly condemned, who crucified our Lord "between two thieves" — thus "numbering with the transgressors" of the vilest kind, the only Man who never transgressed—it is awful to think what account those will have to render at the last day, who vilify His religion, by confounding it with the grossest systems of human imposture, not only in the very points in which the two are different, but in those points in which they are absolutely contrasted.

The pursuit of religious truth is the noblest, as it is the most important pursuit, in which any human being can be engaged.

He who either cares not to be a lover of truth, or takes for

granted that he is such, without taking any pains to acquire the habit, is not likely ever to acquire it.

Men first make up their minds—and the smaller the mind the sooner made up—and then seek for reasons, and if they chance to stumble upon a good reason, of course they do not reject it. But though they are right, they are right only by chance.

Man is naturally more desirous of a quiet and approving, than of a vigilant and tender conscience, more desirous of *security* than of *safety*.

Many a man who is extravagantly imagining that he can purchase repose for his soul in a future life, is in reality seeking for the repose of his soul in *this life*.

In the great day of judgment, each man will not only see his Judge, but he will also see himself, which none *can* do perfectly at present, and which few endeavour to do at all.

Men are apt to overlook the possible high practical importance of thinking rightly on a point which has in *itself* no practical tendency.—The opinion so harmless, however groundless, that in the resurrection, all the same particles of matter which belong to our bodies now, must be brought together and reunited, has left an opening for the cavils of irreligious scoffers. Yet the illustration which Paul employs is that of a seed sown, and this alone is sufficient to refute the error. For we raise from a seed, not the same thing that was sown, but a plant which is very different. "Thou sowest *not* that which shall be, but bare grain,"—that is, mere seed—"but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him."

According to the proverb, which Lord Bacon has somewhere alluded to, "Nettle roots sting not," the first entrance of some false principle, or of some usurped power, is generally in reference to something, in itself, either harmless or else unimportant; and when the root has once got possession of the soil, it will afterwards send up stronger and stronger shoots.

To be blind to the unsoundness of a principle till it produces *actually* all the ill effects that it can consistently lead to, is not to perceive which way the wind is blowing unless it blows a perfect gale.

A self-evident and apparently insignificant truth, admitted under the guise of a truism, has not seldom been converted into a dogma of fearful importance. When the wooden horse has been introduced, it is found to contain armed men concealed within it.

The simplest and most obvious truth, is worth setting forth, that it may clear away some of the fallacies, which, scattered at random, cause impediments in the enquirer's path to truth; even as the wreaths of snow, tossed about fortuitously by the blind fury of the winds, may form serious obstructions in the roads.

Those who on each occasion watched the motions, and registered the times of occultation, of Jupiter's satellites, little thought, perhaps, themselves, what important results they were preparing the way for. Hence, Bacon urges us to pursue truth, without always requiring to perceive its practical application.

Men often speak contemptuously of over exactness — of

attending to minute and subtle distinctions; while these minute distinctions are exactly those which call for careful attention in all who *would escape*, or detect, error. It is for want of attention to minute points, that houses are robbed and set on fire. Burglars do not, in general, come and batter down the front door; but climb in at some window whose fastenings have been neglected; and an incendiary, or a careless servant, does not kindle a tar-barrel in the middle of a room, but leaves a lighted turf, or a candle-snuff, in the thatch or in a heap of shavings.

No truth should be deemed not worth maintaining, nor an unsound principle thought too insignificant to be worth refuting, because no longer needed for establishing some particular conclusion. The time when the need is not pressing, is the very time to provide ourselves with such firm-fixed and right principles as may avail in time of need, and to destroy the roots of those theoretical errors, which may be torpid, yet ready to vegetate as soon as the season is favourable to them. When the storm is in its fury, it may be too late to drop the anchor.

It is not enough to believe what you maintain, you must maintain what you believe; and maintain it, because you believe it.

II. Dread of the Progress of Truth.

To dread danger from the progress of any truth, physical, moral, or religious, is to manifest a want of faith in God's power, or, in His will to maintain His own cause.

Falsehood, like the dry-rot, flourishes the more in proportion as air and light are excluded.

Truths dangerous indeed; Yes — and so are meat and drink; but who will therefore resolve to perish with hunger?

Unless the people can be kept in total darkness, it is the wisest way for the advocates of truth to give them full light.

Those are narrow prejudices which would set science and religion in array against each other, and the practical consequence, the making them indeed adverse, though easy to be foreseen, is often overlooked in practice. If the efforts, formerly made by a bigoted hierarchy, to represent the cultivation of astronomy as opposed to religion, had proved successful, and consequently no Christian had been an astronomer, the result produced by themselves, viz., that no astronomer would have been a Christian, would have been triumphantly appealed to in justification of their censures.

In the Middle Ages, Grammar ("Gramarye") was regarded as a kind of magic art.

Those who avow their dread of the pursuit of knowledge of any kind, as likely to be injurious to the cause of religion, forget that the acknowledgment of such a feeling, or even a bare suspicion of its existence, does more harm to that cause, than all the assaults of its adversaries. However sincere their own belief may, in fact, be, the impression will inevitably be excited, that it is not so; that they secretly distrust the goodness of their cause; and are desirous, from some sinister motive, of keeping up a system of delusion, by suppressing the free exercise of reason. For truth can never be at variance with truth; discoveries in astronomy, for

example, in chemistry, or in geology, may indeed be totally unconnected with religious truths, but can never contradict them. To this it is replied, that it is not truth, but specious falsehood, not real, but pretended discoveries that are dreaded. But this falsehood should be refuted, and these alleged discoveries tested, by an appeal to such data as our natural powers of reason supply; not by an appeal to the Scriptures save as an ancient book; not in reference to their sacred character; in short, not *as* Scripture. We ought to employ Scripture for its own purpose, which is to reveal to us religious and moral truths. It is for us to "behave ourselves valiantly for our country and for the cities of our God," instead of bringing the ark of God into the field of battle to fight for us.

The truths of Religion ought not to be rested on any decision respecting questions belonging to the Natural-philosopher, or the Metaphysician; nor our hopes in God's promises be mixed up with debates about Extension, and Gravitation, and Form.

It is often said, that though it may be well for learned and skilful Divines to have the objections to Christianity placed before them, yet that it is better not to notice objections *generally*, for fear of alarming and unsettling the minds of plain unlearned people, who had, probably, never heard of any thing of the kind. Now, many persons, who have never heard any thing distinct on the subject, have heard, and are made uneasy by, vague reports and obscure rumours of objections, made by some supposed learned men, who have proceeded on "*rational*" grounds, without knowing distinctly what they are; when, perhaps, if these objections were clearly stated to them, they are qualified, by their own

plain sense, to perceive how irrational they are. Suppose you were startled in a dark night, by something that looked like a spectre in a winding-sheet, would not he who should bring a lantern, and show you that it was nothing but a white cloth hanging on a bush, give you far better encouragement, than he who merely exhorted you to "look another way, keep up your heart, whistle and pass on."

Those who censure the endeavours to enlighten the adherents of some erroneous Churches, on the ground, that many of them have thence become atheists, and many, fanatics, forget that this is a probable and natural result, of the pernicious effects upon the mind, of any system of blind, uninquiring, acquiescence, and that therefore to censure the casting out of that evil spirit, which such a system is, would be to condemn the cure of the man possessed with a demon, who, as might have been expected, cruelly rent and mangled the victim, as it came out of him, and left him half dead at its departure.

It is well known that the great doctrines of Justification by faith, and of Spiritual Influence, have been often and grievously perverted. Yet, this perversion is no argument for neglect of them; not only, because neglect of any doctrine, is no less an evil than the abuse of it, but, because the very best security against that abuse, is to preach the doctrine, in its genuine and uncorrupted form. In the vast Savannahs of America, travellers are often, it is said, threatened with destruction from fires, which having been kindled, by some accident, among the luxuriant but sun-scorched vegetation, spread before the wind, with a rapidity which precludes all hope of escape by flight. Their only resource, when thus pursued by the conflagration, is to kindle

the grass before them; and thus leave the flame which follows them no fuel to sustain it.

We are told in *The Spectator*, that when Sir Roger de Coverley first came to his estate, the good knight found three parts of his house altogether useless. The best room had the reputation of being haunted; noises had been heard in another; and his mother had had several chambers shut up, in which deaths, or other disagreeable events, had occurred. In this manner, his habitation was reduced to so small a compass, that he found himself almost shut out of his own house. This story presents itself to my mind, when I see men, without sufficient reason, abandoning part of their rightful possession of Christian doctrine; and confining themselves to a narrow range of Scripture truth.

There may be danger attendant on every truth, since, there is none that may not be perverted by some, or, that may not give offence to others; but, in the case of anything which plainly appears to be truth, every danger must be braved. We must maintain the truth as we have received it, and trust to Him who *is* "the Truth" to prosper and defend it.

III. Bias of Judgment.

Indifference of the *will*, and indifference of the judgment, are two very distinct things that are often confounded.

To wish to find truth on one side rather than the other, is natural and often wise; but to *think* that true which we

wish, and merely *because* we wish it, is always an undeniable folly.

The confusion in some men's minds between truth and reality—between the report of a thing which might be either true or false, and the thing reported, which either is, or is not, is exhibited in the way in which men believe or disbelieve, not with a view to the truth, or falsity of what is said, but according as it is favourable or unfavourable to their wishes,—"Prophesy unto us smooth things; prophesy unto us deceits." A similar confusion makes men dislike the messenger of evil, as if he brought upon them the evil, instead of merely bringing them the knowledge of it.

As any one may bring himself to believe almost anything that he is inclined to believe, it makes all the difference whether we *begin or end* with the enquiry, "What is truth?"

There should be an endeavor to preserve the indifference of the *judgment*, even in cases where the *will* cannot, and should not, be indifferent.

The judgment is like a pair of scales, and evidences like the weights; but the will holds the balances in its hand; and even a slight jerk will be sufficient, in many cases, to make the lighter scale appear the heavier.

Men are too apt to ask, as the first question, not how far each doctrine is agreeable to *Scripture*, but to *themselves;* not whether it is conformable to God's will, but to their own.

When comparing opinions or practices with the standard of God's word, we must beware, lest we suffer these opinions

or practices to *bend the rule* by which they are to be measured.

Some persons follow the dictates of their conscience, only in the same sense in which a coachman may be said to follow the horses he is driving.

It makes all the difference, whether we pursue a certain course *because we judge* it right; or judge it to be right *because we pursue* it.

There are two objects which he who seeks is almost sure to find—the one is, the knowledge of what he ought to do—the other, an excuse for what he is inclined to do.

Inclination, when suffered to bias the judgment in embracing conclusions, acts like the magnet said to have been once secretly placed near a ship's compass by a traitor, who, purposing to deliver the crew into the enemy's hands, thus made all their diligence and skill only serve to further them in the wrong course.

There is no absurdity so gross which men will not readily admit, if it appears to favour a conclusion of which they are already convinced. Even a candid and sensible man, is not unlikely to be misled by this, to use arguments which would never have convinced himself, had he not been convinced before; and are not likely to convince others, but rather (by the operation of the converse fallacy) to *confirm* in their dissent those who before disagreed with him.

It is not only the outward profession, but the real convictions of the judgment, that are liable to be biassed by the

influence of interest, party spirit, or other improper motives. "A gift," as the Scriptures express it, "blinds the eyes." Sincerity, in this sense, accordingly — (not that kind which consists in the exercise of an unbiassed judgment, earnestly and *sincerely* endeavouring to ascertain what is true, and which is justly regarded as so commendable a quality that many and great errors are reckoned pardonable, in proportion as a man possesses it;) but sincerity in the sense of unfeigned persuasion that wrong is right, and truth falsehood— is described by the great moralist of antiquity as the last stage of corruption.

According to the Hindoo Law, the penalty denounced against a particular crime is remitted only in case of the inducement to its commission being the present of an elephant; that being considered a douceur too magnificent for any one to be expected to refuse. Now, in Europe, though an actual elephant is not the very thing that offers the strongest temptation, there is in most people's conscience something analogous to it, and different things are "elephants" to different people. It is well for every man to be on the look-out, each for his own "elephant."

When people have resolved to shut their eyes, or to look only on one side, it is of little consequence how good their eyes may be.

Men make up their minds before-hand, and assume, with regard to any reasons brought before them, the office, not of a judge, but of an advocate, who aims at drawing out of each witness, whatever he can that favours his own side, and cushioning all that makes against him. Thus many a reader of the Bible reads it through coloured glasses.

The generality of men are not so much accustomed to pursue this or that course, in consequence of their previous conviction that it is right, as to believe that it is right, because they have been accustomed to pursue it.

It is one thing to pray that we may learn *what is right;* and another thing to pray that we may *find ourselves in the right.*

The more easy of belief any one is, in respect of what falls in with his wishes or preconceived notions, the harder of belief he will be, of anything that opposes them:—therefore the testimony of the early disciples of Jesus is even the stronger from their prejudices all running counter to their testimony.

If men will consult the Scriptures, as Balaam enquired of God, with a secret bias; not acquiescing at once in the Divine decision but trying once more "what the Lord will say," they will, like him, be indulged in finding something more conformable to their sinful wish; even as Balaam, on his second application, received permission to "go with the men," and yet "the Lord's anger was kindled against him because he went."

Into whatever opinions or conduct men are led by any human propensities, they seek to defend and justify them by the best arguments they can frame; and then, assign (as they often do in perfect sincerity) these arguments as the cause of their adopting such notions, whereas they are in reality the effect. Thus the chance (however small it may be) of rectifying their errors, is diminished. For, if these be in reality traceable to some deep-seated principle of our nature,

as soon as one false foundation on which they have been placed is removed, another will be substituted; as soon as one theory is proved untenable, a new one will be devised in its place. Thus, arguments, even the strongest and the clearest, will usually prove too weak to overthrow the "Idols of the Race" (*idola tribus*) as Bacon calls them:—the errors springing out of man's nature.

It is only through the enlightening and supporting grace of the Holy Spirit, that the Scriptures themselves can be consulted with advantage.

While carefully guarding against the judgment being biassed by inclination, it should not be forgotten that it is a great mistake, and one that leads to important practical error, to assume that all people believe what they wish for. It is quite as often the reverse: thus, we find men sometimes "believing not for joy" something which they feel a strong desire for; and again, sometimes tormented with groundless alarms of something which they much dread; with excessive doubt in cases where their wishes are strong, —and morbid distrust of evidence which they are especially anxious to find conclusive. The proverbial expression of "too good news to be true," bears witness to the existence of this feeling.

Some writers disparage the judgment of those who have been accustomed to study and to teach the Christian Religion, and who derive hope and satisfaction from it, on the ground that they must wish to find it true; and yet the very same writers pass by the strong testimony, afforded on the same principle, by the multitudes who admit the truth of

Christianity, though they have every reason to wish it untrue — as being to them a source of uneasiness and dismay.

A conclusion may be safely adopted, though in accordance with inclination, provided it be not *founded* upon it.

The proper office of candour is to prepare the mind, not, for the *rejection* of all evidence, but for the right reception of evidence; not to be a substitute for reasons, but, to enable us *fairly* to weigh the reasons on both sides. To say otherwise is, in fact, to argue, that since just weights *alone*, without a just balance, will avail nothing, therefore, we have only to take care of the scales, and let the weights take care of themselves.

Declamations are current in the present day against the iniquity of giving a bias to the minds of young persons, by teaching them our own interpretation of the sacred volume, instead of leaving them to investigate for themselves; that is, against endeavoring to place them in the same situation with those to whom those very Scriptures were written; instead of leaving them to struggle with difficulties which the Scriptures no where contemplate nor provide against. The maintainers of such a principle would do well to consider, whether it would not, if consistently pursued, prove too much. Do you not, it might be asked, bias the minds of children by putting into their hands the Scriptures themselves, as the infallible word of God? If you are convinced that they are so, you must be sure that they will stand the test of unprejudiced enquiry. Are you not, at least, bound in fairness to teach them at the same time, the systems of ancient mythology, the doctrines of the Koran, and those of modern philosophers, that they may freely choose amongst

all? Let any one who is disposed to deride the absurdity of such a proposal, consider whether there is any objection to it, which would not equally lie against the exclusion of systematic religious instruction, or indeed systematic training in any science or art. It would follow from this principle, that no physician should be trusted who is not utterly indifferent whether his patient recovers or dies, and wholly free from any favourable hope from the mode of treatment pursued.

The more awfully important any question is, the greater is the call for a rigid investigation of what may be urged on both sides; that the decision may be made on sound, rational, and Scriptural grounds, and not according to the dictates of excited feelings and imagination.

IV. Aversion to Doubt, and unnecessary Delay in Decision.

An aversion to doubt — a dislike of having the judgment kept in suspense, combined with indolence in investigation, induces the great mass of mankind to *make up their minds* on a variety of points, not one of which they have been enabled thoroughly to examine.

Men, in thinking only of what they are running from, forget what they are running towards.

He who does not in all cases prefer doubt to the reception of falsehood, or to the admission of any conclusion on insuffi-

cient evidence, is no lover of truth, nor in the right way to attain it in any point.

There is no right faith in believing what is true, unless we believe it *because* it is true.

Men grow impatient at the doubts and difficulties which beset the operations of the understanding. But if errors spring from its imperfection, is it not a strange remedy to quicken its too hurried pace, and limit its too narrow powers? Would any choose a clerk in money matters, who, puzzled by a long and intricate calculation, and uncertain, after all his care, of having escaped error, should boldly efface the sum total, and put down such a result as ought in his opinion to be correct? Such is the theory and practice of what is sadly miscalled Faith in many minds. Like Jack (in Swift's profane pasquinade) they have mused so long on the imperfections of eye-sight and the mischief of optical illusions, that they resolve to shut their eyes entirely, or, at least, never to venture out in daylight.

To bid a man, when in doubt between two opposing arguments, to *act* as if certain, is often as wise as it is necessary; but to say to a man "*Because* you are in doubt, believe without any doubt, for this is safest for you," must always be absurd. Yet the pretence of the greatest safety to be found in a Church demanding implicit and undoubting belief in all it teaches, even though it were to teach that black is white, is what catches unthinking persons more than anything else.

Men may succeed in saving themselves from actual doubt, without delivering themselves from reasons for doubt.

To take refuge from the morbid dread of uncertainty in an authority, while wilfully blind to its doubtfulness, is, to save, as it were, the ship from being driven about, at the mercy of winds and currents, by casting anchor on an object which is itself floating.

To reject one side of a question on perceiving that it involves great difficulties, and to embrace the other side of the alternative, without staying to examine whether there are more or fewer on that other side, is as if a traveller, when he had the choice of two roads, should, immediately on perceiving that there are impediments on the one, decide on taking the other, before he had ascertained whether it were even passable.

It is a common practice to decide at once against any measure that may appear in itself objectionable, in cases where there is, perhaps, nothing but a choice of difficulties before us; as when the throwing, for example, of a valuable cargo into the sea, is the only mode left of saving the ship.

A choice of difficulties seems a necessary condition of human affairs. For it perpetually happens, in every department of life, that there will be objections, greater or less, to each of any possible courses before us. And yet, many intelligent persons sit down quite satisfied that they have proved their point when they have shown the grave objections to one course, without at all noticing those that lie against all the others; and without perceiving that they are in the condition alluded to in the Roman proverb, "*Lupum auribus teneo;*" when it is difficult and hazardous to keep one's hold, and eminently hazardous to let it go.

Suspension of judgment, so often urged, as long as there

are reasons on both sides, is practically, since there always will be reasons on both sides, the very same thing as a *decision in favour of the existing state* of things. "Not to resolve is to resolve." Happy it is for mankind, that, in many of the most momentous concerns of life, their decision is generally formed for them, by external circumstances; which thus saves them, not only from the perplexity of doubt and the danger of delay, but also from the pain of regret; since we acquiesce much more cheerfully in that which is unavoidable.

The main, and almost the universal, fallacy of Anti-christians is, in showing that there are objections against Christianity, and thence inferring that it should be rejected; when that which ought to have been proved is, that there are *more* or *stronger* objections against the receiving than the rejecting of it. At the first announcement of the Gospel, when Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be the promised Deliverer, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, the burden of proof lay with Him. No one could be fairly called on to admit His pretensions, till He showed cause for believing in Him. If "He had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." Now the case is reversed, and the religion exists, that is the phenomenon; those who will not allow it to have come from God, are bound to solve it on some other hypothesis less open to objections. Infidels, when supposing it to have been a human contrivance, not established by miracles, are bound to give an explanation of the still greater miracle—its having arisen and prevailed as it did, in defiance of all opposition—forcing men of all ranks and of all nations to disown the gods of their ancestors, and to adore a Jewish peasant, who had been cut off by the most ignominious death. This explanation they

have never given, though they have had 1800 years to try; and thus they have tacitly confessed, that no hypothesis can be devised which will not be open to greater objections than lie against Christianity.

There may be objections which none can answer, and others which the unlearned cannot, of themselves, be expected at once to answer, against conclusions which, yet, may be fairly established by a preponderance of evidence; by positive proofs that have more force than the objections, even if left unanswered. "There are objections," said Dr. Johnson, "against a plenum, and objections against a vacuum; but one of them must be true."

Disbelieving is believing; since to disbelieve any assertion is to believe its contradictory; and whoever does this on slight grounds is both credulous and incredulous; these being, in fact, one and the same habit of mind. This, though self-evident, is frequently lost sight of, owing to the employing in reference to the Christian religion the words, "Believer and unbeliever;" whence, unthinking persons are led to take for granted, that the rejection of Christianity implies less easy belief than its reception. Whereas, in reality, the infidel shows greater credulity than the Christian. The Christian believes that miracles took place in the setting up of Christianity, but assigns a sufficient *cause* for those wonderful events—namely, the Almighty power of God; and a sufficient *reason* for His exertion of that power — namely, to attest a divine Revelation. They, on the contrary, suppose that all the best established laws of the human mind were violated, and that men, in this one case, acted differently from the way in which they act in every other, while yet they are unable to assign any probable cause, or any

specious reason for such an astounding miracle. And no one should make a boast of his "incredulity" in disbelieving something that is very strange, while he is believing, as the only alternative, something incomparably more strange.

Divine Providence seems to have designed that men should not be forced into belief of Revelation, by evidence which, like that of geometrical demonstration, should leave no distinction between the well-disposed and the ill-diposed.

Three great requisites for decision are within the reach of ordinary men, as well as of the most learned and able. (1.) A sincere desire to attain Truth in order to regulate opinions and conduct by it alone; (2.) pure moral principle; and (3.) attentive study and calm enquiry. Do not be in a hurry to form an opinion, but do not unnecessarily put it off. Do not decide without inquiry, but do not, in order to avoid deciding, omit enquiry.

Some men see no medium between a claim to infallibility on the one hand, and universal hesitation — absolute scepticism—on the other. An appeal to the common sense which every man exercises on *all but religious* subjects, might be sufficient to prove, not only the absurdity of this reasoning, but their own conviction of its absurdity. Sensible men, every day, decide questions in Medicine, in Agriculture, in Navigation, with sufficient confidence for all practical purposes, yet without holding themselves to be infallible.

A confident expectation that no argument *will* be adduced that will change our opinions, is very different from a *resolution* that none ever *shall* We may *print* but not stereotype our opinions.

He that is not open to conviction, is not qualified for discussion.

We must always think our opinions are right; but not think our opinions are right always.

Misgive that you may not mistake.

Though not always called upon to *condemn* ourselves, it is always safe to *suspect* ourselves.

As a consciousness of peccability in moral conduct leads us to utter with sincerity the words, "who can tell how oft he offendeth? Oh! cleanse Thou me from my secret faults," —the consciousness of peccability in judgment should make us equally ready to add, "who can tell how oft he mistaketh?"

To examine and re-examine — to reason and reflect — to hesitate and decide with caution — to be always open to evidence,—and to acknowledge that after all we are liable to error;—all this is unacceptable to the human mind—both to its diffidence and to its pride;—to its indolence, its dread of anxious cares—and to its love of self-satisfied and confident repose.

As the skilful and cautious navigator incurs no risk from hoping that the reckoning he carefully keeps will prove correct, so long as he never so far trusts to it as not to "keep a look-out," and to "take an observation" when opportunity offers; so, the earnest and diligent seeker after Truth who acts on his convictions as if he were certain of their being correct, and examines and re-examines the grounds of them,

as if he suspected them of being erroneous, need not fear, but that in proportion as he is watchfully and prayerfully on his guard against the unseen current of passions and prejudices which is ever tending to drive him out of the right course, in the same degree will he succeed in attaining all necessary religious truths. For this self-distrust, this perpetual care, and diligent watchfulness, and openness to conviction, are so far from necessarily implying a state of painful and unceasing doubt, that as they furnish the best safeguard against error, so they afford the best grounds for a cheering hope of having attained truth. For, as long as the lover of Truth exercises this caution,—so long as he is open to enquiry and incessantly ready to try every religious question by Scripture and by reason,—so long he will have been making that use of all his advantages, natural and supernatural, which Divine wisdom evidently designed: so long, he will have been doing his utmost to conform to the will of God; and so long, consequently, he shall have the better reason for cherishing an humble hope that He, "the Spirit of Truth," is, and will be, with him, to enlighten his understanding, to guide his conduct, and to lead him onwards to that state in which Faith shall be succeeded by sight, and Hope, by enjoyment.

V. Desire of a Supposed Happy Medium.

It is a truism, but one often practically forgotten, that there is no medium between truth and falsehood.

The golden mean, and avoiding of extremes, upon which some pride themselves may be but an attempt to *stop short*

between the premises and the conclusion; a medium between *the abandonment of a false principle* and the adoption of *all* its legitimate consequences.

The real medium of rectitude is not to be attained by geometrical measurement. The varieties of human error have no power to fix the exact place of truth. On the contrary, it happens in respect of religion as well as in all other subjects, that each one of two parties will maintain some things that are perfectly true and right, and others that are wholly wrong and mischievous; and that, in other points again, the one party or the other, will be much the more remote from the truth. So that any one who studies to keep himself in every point just *half-way between* two contending parties, will probably be as often in the wrong as either of them.

The vulgar are apt to conclude that where a great deal is said, *something* must be true; and adopting that lazy contrivance for saving the trouble of thinking, splitting the difference, imagine they show a laudable caution in believing only *part* of what is said. This is to be as simple as the clown who thinks he has bought a great bargain of a Jew, because he has beat down the price from a guinea to a crown for some article that is not really worth a groat.

One may often hear it observed that there is a *great deal of truth* in what such a one has said: *i. e.*, perhaps it is *all* true *except one esssential* point.

The weak, the uncandid, and the unthinking often congratulate themselves on having attained that happy medium between opposite extremes in which, they have been told,

wisdom consists; while they have only attained the mimic wisdom of sliding alternately into each extreme; and instead of being led by neither party, are actually being led by *both.* A man whose orbit is really independent, will find it coincide in what astronomers call Nodes — sometimes with one, and sometimes with another orbit.

VI. The Love of System.

There is no more common error in many departments of study, and especially in Theology, than the prevalence of a love of *system* over the love of *truth.* Men are often so much captivated by the aspect of what seems to them a regular, beautiful, and well-connected theory, as to adopt it hastily, without enquiring in the outset how far it is conformable to facts, or to Scriptural authority; and thus, often on one or two passages of Scripture, have built up an ingenious and consistent scheme, of which the far greater part is a tissue of their own reasonings and conjectures.

The love of system leads to a confounding of the essential and important, with what is, in reality, totally unconnected with it. The whole system of faith of some, may be compared to some of the ancient compound medicines, of great efficacy and value, though cumbered with several drugs that are utterly inert. Many practitioners, unskilled in analysis, cannot conceive but that the success with which the compound is often administered, is a proof of the efficacy of each ingredient, and of the absurdity of thinking to separate them.

The mode in which theological knowledge is too commonly taught, is from uninspired writers, who *interweave* indeed, in their works much of Scripture, but make this rather *a commentary on their system*, than the basis and substratum on which they are to comment. They are apt to make a human system the *warp* instead of the *woof;* whereas the proper course would be to reverse that procedure—to take Scripture as the warp, and interweave their own remarks, explanations and applications.

The more the Scriptures are viewed in the light of a regularly formed philosophic system, the greater will be the disposition to find in them a regular technical vocabulary; for any system appears the more complete and distinct from all others, when provided with a distinct, regular, technical phraseology, like a corporate body, with its coat of arms and motto.

The adhering too closely to any fixed set of expressions, in religious discussions, has a tendency to deaden men's attention to the *things* signified; and, by leading them to mistake words for things, to lay the foundation of erroneous theories. The Sacred Writers aimed at no philosophical regularity of language, and the terms used by them are to be understood, not according to a precise, scientific definition, but each with reference to the context of the place where it is found.

The technical terms of the various systems of philosophical theology, are more numerous than those of almost any science, and were in many instances taken from the sacred writers — *taken* from them, in *every* sense of the phrase; since hardly any theologian confined himself to *their* use of

the terms. The *materials* indeed, are the stones of the Temple: but the building constructed with them is a fabric of human contrivance.

A regular compact system of theology, professedly compiled from Scripture, tends to foster that neglect of the study of Scripture, that averseness to labour in the investigation of truth,—that indolent, unenquiring acquiescence in what is ready prepared for acceptance in the lump, — to which man is by nature so much disposed; and which the structure of the Christian Scriptures seems to have been expressly designed to guard against, by requiring that one passage should be compared with another, and instruction elicited from scattered, oblique, and incidental references to various doctrines.

The arguments and systems which have been reared by words mistaken for things, remind one of the fog-banks, which, at sea, so often delude the anxious mariner; he fancies himself within view of new coasts with promontories, and bays, and mountains distinctly discernible; but a nearer approach, and a more steady observation, prove the whole to be but an unsubstantial vapour, ready to melt away into air, and vanish for ever.

The lover of Truth without any bias in favour of any theory, however ingenious and consistent, must "prove all things and hold fast that which is good;" — and must admit no conclusion which is not itself, as well as the premises it is drawn from, agreeable to the Word of God. "Sir," (said one of the most eminent of the Reformers) "I dare speak no further, yea, almost none otherwise than as the Scripture doth as it were lead me by the hand."

VII. Dread of the Character of Inconsistency.

The dread of *Inconsistency* must never be suffered to swallow up the dread of *error*.

It is mere idle declamation about consistency, to represent it as a disgrace to a man to confess himself wiser to-day than yesterday. There is no inconsistency at all in declaring that we have seen reason to alter our opinion. The term should be confined to a man's holding, expressly or impliedly, contrary opinions at the same time, or, as the phrase is, "looking one way and rowing another."

A man is often charged with inconsistency for accommodating his judgment or his conduct to the circumstances before him, as the mariner sets his sails to the wind; though in many instances the inconsistency would be in the opposite proceeding,—in *not* shifting the sails when the wind changes.

As every man, who is not infallible, is liable to some errors, he virtually lays claim to infallibility, who prides himself on his consistency, on the ground of resolving never to change his opinions or plans; unless, indeed, he qualifies that claim by proclaiming himself either too dull to detect his mistakes, or too obstinate to own them.

Many a man is censured as inconsistent, whom it would be more proper to characterize as fickle and unsteady.

It is much easier to boast of consistency than to preserve it. For as in the dark, or in a fog, adverse troops may take post near each other without mutual recognition, and conse-

quently without contest, but as soon as daylight comes the weaker gives place to the stronger; so, in a misty and darkened mind, the most incompatible opinions may exist together without any perception of their discrepancy, till the understanding becomes sufficiently enlightened to enable the man to reject the less reasonable opinions, and retain the opposites.

To censure a man as inconsistent when he alters his course of proceeding, his language, his opinions, &c., in conformity with a change of circumstances, is to censure him for that which *must* be continually practised by every one who is not insane; — to censure him for changing his mind on finding himself mistaken, though circumstances remain the same, is to censure him for what *ought* to be practised by every one who is not infallible; — and to censure him for holding contrary opinions at the same time, though this,—and this only —may strictly and properly be called inconsistency, and ought sedulously to be avoided, is to misapply the censure, which would be better directed, not against the inconsistency of his notions with each other, but for the erroneousness of those which *are* erroneous. The consistency with each other, of opinions that are all wrong, is far enough from improving the case.

As no one should be censured for Inconsistency, so no one should be praised for Consistency; because where there *is* ground for either censure or praise, some better reason for it may always be assigned.

The maintaing of Consistency must always be a bad reason to give for any act or opinion: if a principle or measure is right, that surely is reason enough for supporting it; if

wrong, surely the being in the wrong yesterday is a bad reason for being wrong to-day.

VIII. Suppression of the Exercise of Reason.

As the Telescope is not a substitute for, but an aid to, our sight; so, Revelation is not designed to supersede the use of reason, but to supply its deficiencies.

It is the characteristic of Truth to bear discussion.

Those who deprecate the asking or giving a reason for their faith, must not wonder if it be supposed that they have a faith for which there is no reason.

If a man once comes to doubt of what he had been accustomed to take for granted, he will reject it.

Unless reason be employed in ascertaining what doctrines are revealed, humility cannot be exercised in acquiescing in them.

Those who, in accordance with the apostolic injunction, are "ready to *give* a reason of the faith that is in them," will be also ready to *hear* reason.

There is a kind of believer in religion, who wishes to believe, from a conviction that religion is a *desirable* sentiment to cherish; and resolves never to enquire whether it is true, from a suspicion that the enquiry might prove fatal.

Many people are led into the error of fancying that an irrational faith is even firmer than a rational one, by mistaking for a firm belief, a firm resolution of the *will* to believe. They seem to imagine that faith can be made firm only by a sort of brute force upon the understanding, and by *browbeating*, as it were, their own minds, and those of others, into implicit submission. Now you never see traces of this kind of violence in the case of other truths which men really believe most firmly. You never hear a man protesting with great vehemence, that he is convinced that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, or that the earth is round like a ball, and not flat, like a platter; and denouncing all who cannot see the proof. Good proof *satisfies* the mind of itself, and excludes reasonable doubt without any violent effort. When you are sure that the door is strong enough to keep out the intruder, you sit quietly by your fireside, and let him kick his heels against it till he is tired. But if you rushed over and clapped your back and shoulders to the bolt, that would imply that the door is really weak, or, at least that your faith in it is weak; — that is, that you had not full confidence in its strength.

A clear or faint apprehension of the subject matter, and a clear or faint apprehension of the *evidence* of it, are two things totally different and entirely unconnected, yet often confounded in what pertains to religion, though never, by any one of ordinary good sense, in any subject where religion is not concerned. For instance,—there is, I suppose, no one who seriously doubts the existence of something which we call soul—or mind—be it substance or attribute, material or immaterial—and of the mutual connexion between it and the body. Yet how very faint and imperfect a notion it is that we can form of it, and of many of its phenomena that are of

daily occurrence! The partial suspension of mental and bodily functions during sleep,—the effects of opium and other drugs on both body and mind, — the influence, exercised by volition, and by various mental emotions, on the muscles, and on other parts of the bodily frame,—and many other of these phenomena, have exercised for ages the ingenuity of the ablest men, to find even any approximation towards but an imperfect explanation of them. Yet the *evidence on which we believe in the reality* of these, and of many other things no less dimly and partially understood, is perfect.—On the other hand, the characters, transactions, &c., represented by dramatic writers, or described by historians, are often as *clearly intelligible* as it is possible for anything to be; yet from the total want of evidence, or from the want of clear and decisive evidence, as to their *reality*, we regard them as either entire fictions, or mixtures of fable and truth, or as more or less likely to have actually existed. The character and conduct of Lear, for instance, or Othello, or Hamlet, or Macbeth, are perfectly intelligible; though it is very doubtful how far the tales which suggested to Shakespeare the most of his dramas had any foundation in fact, or were originally fictitious. Many, again, of the orations recorded by the ancient Greek and Roman historians, are as easily and plainly to be understood as any that are reported in our own times; but in what degree each of these is a faithful record of what was actually spoken, is a point on which we have, in some cases, a slight and imperfect evidence; and in others, none that deserves the name. — Now, Religion does not, in this respect, really differ from other subjects. Accordingly, we find that the evidence for the Christian religion was perfect and distinct, though its character was imperfectly understood by those to whom it was first preached; and that, dim, and indistinct, and imperfect, as were still their notions

(as to a great degree ours must also be) concerning "the Son of God," it was no indistinct or imperfect evidence on which they believed that He *was* so; while, on the other hand, the character and pretensions of the false Christs, who afterwards arose, were readily understood; but were supported by no evidence that could satisfy an unprejudiced mind, bent on the attainment of truth.

The representing *all* appeal to reason, as useless in cases where the argumentative faculty is not *alone* sufficient, is like denying the utility of light, because it will not enable a man to see, whose eyes are not in a state to perform their functions.

To decline beginning at all, because we must begin in imperfection, is to say, that since veteran soldiers only are well fitted to perform their part, therefore, none but veterans should be brought into the field.

Our indistinct conceptions of a truth, affect not the reality of its existence, any more than things, because seen dimly in the dark, become in themselves the less substantial.

As the prudent traveller, compelled to journey in the twilight,—while ever mindful of the risk of straying from the path and forming false judgments of the country round, viewed by the imperfect light,—yet, in his natural wish, that the sun would rise, neglects not to make the best use he can of his eyes, in the faint glimmering that is allowed him; so, the wise Christian will not be led, by his conviction of the limited and imperfect nature of the human faculties, to slacken or remit, as vain, his enquiries.

Truth is a steady thing, and acts steadily through the reason, by the weight of evidence. To rest upon men's fancies and feelings only, is to work upon that which flags and becomes sluggish when not continually roused by fresh excitement; just as a drunkard is tempted to drink more deeply every day, from finding that his constitution needs the stimulant more and more.

There is surely as much presumption in measuring everything by our own feelings, fancies, and prejudices, as by our own reasonings.

Fancy, when once brought into religion, knows not where to stop. It is like one of those fiends in old stories which any one could *raise*, but which, when raised, could never be kept within the magic circle.

Those who distrust all exercise of the intellect, while resigning themselves freely to the guidance of what they call the heart, that is, their prejudices, passions, inclinations, and fancies, would do well to remember that the disciples were led by the dictates of a sound *understanding* to say, "No man can do these miracles . . . . except God be with him," and then to believe and obey Jesus implicitly; but that Peter was led by his *heart* to say, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee."

Each part of our nature should be duly controlled, and kept within its own proper province; and the whole "brought into subjection to Christ," and dedicated to Him. But there is no real Christian humility—though there be debasement—in renouncing the exercise of human reason, to follow the dictates of human feeling. The Apostle's precept is, "in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."

The voluntary humiliation of those who are ever declaiming against the pride of human reason, and insisting on the necessity of being guided by the heart rather than the head, is a prostration not of themselves before God, but of one part of themselves before another part, and resembles the idolatry of the Israelites in the wilderness. The people *stripped themselves* of their golden ornaments, and cast them into the fire, "and there came out this calf."

That faith which is counted for righteousness, consists not in believing *without* evidence, but in being open to evidence; not in believing without good reason, but in listening to reason.

IX. Abuse of Reason.

Reason can never be better employed than in deciding where her operations must be stopped.—

> "Nescire velle quæ magister optimus
> Docere non vult, erudita inscitia est."

When once it has been ascertained that a Divine revelation exists, our own speculations ought to be controlled and regulated by that revelation; they should never be suffered to range, unlimited and unassisted, on a subject on which God has himself decided that man is not competent, of himself, to judge rightly. If Reason be enthroned as the judge and law-giver, she will not readily resign her seat and submit her decisions to Revelation.

There are two mistakes which have an especial tendency to lead to presumptuous speculation, one of the chief sources

of error in theological and metaphysical discussions:—first, the expectation, oftentimes illgrounded, that *full* and *distinct* notions may be obtained of whatever is *revealed* in Scripture; and secondly, the mistake of supposing that we understand more clearly than we do, any thing of which the *name* is very familiar to us: a mistake like that of him who, because a letter of the alphabet is employed in algebraical calculations to denote some unknown quantity, should suppose that, by this means, it becomes at once a *known* quantity.

It is not that one of the philosophical theories that have been introduced to explain the Christian dispensation is wrong for *this* reason, and another for *that*, but they are *all* wrong alike; because they *are theories* relative to matters on which to form any philosophical theories whatever, is vain, and absurd, and irreverent:

"Unus utrique
Error; sed variis illudit partibus."

It is well worth while to remark the manner in which each form of "philosophy and vain deceit" is opposed by the sacred writers, and by John in particular. Suppose a plain man to have been listening to a great deal of ingenious, speculative conjecture as to what must be, or are likely to be, the climate, condition, and productions of a certain distant country, and to reply, "I know, as a matter of fact, and can bear witness, that none of these things are as you say, for I am intimate with a person, whom you know to be of unquestioned knowledge and credibility, who is a *native* of that country; I have conversed much with him on the subject, and he has shown me the productions of the country. I will tell you what he has said to me, and what he has

shown me, which will prove to you that your speculations are wholly unfounded." Now just such is the character of John's Gospel.

As, in total darkness, or in respect of objects beyond our horizon, the dimmest and the clearest sight are on a level, so learning cannot advance one man beyond another, in the comprehension of things confessedly beyond the reach of the human faculties.

To bring in human philosophy to help out Revelation, when it cannot be made even to seem to gratify curiosity about things of no practical importance, is to bring a lamp to the dial-plate, when the sun-light fails, in order to find out the hour.

To dare to believe less, or to pretend to understand more, than God has expressly revealed, is equally profane presumption.

The next best thing to understanding the whole of any subject, is to be aware of that part of it we do *not* understand.

The old proverb, "A fool can ask more questions than a wise man can answer," may very fairly have this added as a rider to it, "A wise man cannot ask more questions than he will find fools ready to answer."

Too much attention cannot be bestowed on that important yet much neglected branch of learning — the knowledge of man's ignorance.

Of matters relating to the Deity none *need* know less, and none *can* know more than the Almighty has revealed.

We should study to be wise, not above Scripture, but in Scripture; to learn, not the things which God has *concealed*, but what he has revealed.

Where full and accurate knowledge is not to be attained, it is a great point to keep clear of presumptuous error. Where the darkness cannot be removed, it is a great point to be aware that it *is* darkness, instead of being deceived and misled, by false lights and delusive appearances.

To seek to be "wise above that which is written," is to forget, that, by want of humility was that ruin incurred to retrieve which God was made man in Christ Jesus, who "*humbled* Himself unto death;" and to repeat the presumptuous transgression, which had shut the gates of eternal life. By inquisitive pride was immortal happiness forfeited, and the path by which we must travel back to its recovery, is that of patient and resigned humility.

The best heathen moralists knew not that the first step to elevation is humility; that though the palace of Wisdom be, indeed, a lofty structure, its entrance is low, and it forbids admission without bending. They knew not, or at least, taught not, that our nature must be exalted by first understanding and acknowledging the full amount of its weakness and imperfection, — "Jesus called unto Him a little child, and set him in the midst;"—what other teacher ever did the like?

There are three points of analogy in our situation to that of children — as respects knowledge. It is, 1st, relative in kind; — 2nd, scanty and imperfect in degree; — and, 3rd, practically sufficient. And in regard to the duties thence

resulting, they are humility, docility, and devoted and affectionate submission to a Father's will.

As a child's father may be some mighty sovereign, or an eminent statesman, poet, philosopher, or warrior—one whose life is of importance to millions, or whose fame spreads over half the globe; and yet be regarded by the child, who has but a very faint, if any, conception of all this, merely as *his father;* so our knowledge of God is almost entirely relative. —He is revealed to us, not as He is in Himself, but, chiefly as He is in relation to ourselves.

It is accounted a mark of silly presumption in a child, to pretend to understand fully, and pronounce upon positively, the nature of anything as it is in itself; or to suppose that his friends have no other concerns to attend to, beside what relates to him. And is it not something worse than childish, to reason upon and discuss boldly, and pronounce upon dogmatically, the attributes and acts of God! If humility is essentially becoming in a child, it must also be in a Christian, who is, and ever must be, in respect of the Creator, a child, and much less than a child.

As the earthly parent, whose character and designs are very imperfectly and indistinctly understood by his little children, yet communicates enough to them to entitle him to their love and confidence, and cheerful obedience; so the knowledge imparted to us in the Scriptures is sufficient for all practical purposes.—Amid all our weakness and ignorance that which we can best understand is our duty.

The absurd mistakes of children, from concluding that things must be *alike* because they are analogous and bear

similar relations to something else, may serve as a mirror to show the sort of mistakes we have also to guard against in the notions we form of the Almighty.

We should not rest satisfied with having *admitted* once for all, but we must also keep *steadily in view*, the necessity of a most reverent and trembling caution, and self-distrust, when we speak of "the secret things" that "belong to the Lord our God."

The Christian, while earnestly seeking such knowledge as is "able to make (us) wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," should in his studies keep in mind that we now know but "in part" and see "through a glass, darkly;" and by his life illustrate his conviction, that the "things which are revealed belong unto us, ... that we may *do* all the works of this Law."

X. Superstition.

Every truth, like true coin, has its counterfeit.

Superstition is not (as it has been defined) an *excess* of religious feeling, but a *misdirection* of it, an exhausting of it on vanities of man's devising.

Nothing is harmless that is *mistaken* for a virtue.

The more disposed any one is to submissive veneration, the greater the importance of guarding him against misdi-

rected veneration—against false piety; against receiving as Divine, what, in reality, is human.

Minds strongly predisposed to superstition, may be compared to heavy bodies just balanced on the verge of a precipice. The slightest touch will send them over; and then, the greatest exertion that can be made, may be insufficient to arrest their fall.

Fanaticism implies Superstition; but is not *necessarily* implied by it.

The more nearly any Superstitions approach to, so as to blend themselves with, true religion, the more do they deteriorate the spirit of it: — the more does the poisonous parasite, twining round the fairest boughs of the good tree, blight, by its noxious neighbourhood, the fruits which that tree should have borne.

Falsehood, like poison, will generally be rejected when administered alone; but when blended with wholesome ingredients, may be swallowed unperceived.

Almost every system of superstition, to be rightly understood, should be read backwards. The fable, of the unburied, wandering disconsolate on the banks of the river Styx, was not the cause, but the effect, of that anxiety about our mortal remains, which has been felt in every age and country.

A readiness on the part of the people for delusion, is not so much the *consequence*, as itself the origin of priestcraft. It should not be forgotten, that the first *recorded* instance

of departure from purity of worship, as established by the revelation to the Israelites, was forced on the *priest* by the *people*. The excuse offered by Aaron for making the golden calf was, that he did it at the desire of the Israelites.

To believe that the superstitious are, after all, on the safe side, is to believe that it is safe to *combine* with the medicines of a skilful physician, all the nostrums of all the ignorant practitioners in the neighbourhood.

There is no safe side but the side of truth.

One of the most prevailing characteristics of superstition, which is, at least, found, more or less, in most species of it, is the attributing of some sacred efficacy to the performance of an *outward* act, or the presence of some material object; without anything else being needed, except an undoubting faith in that intrinsic efficacy.

As a patient will take his revenge for the nauseous dose he dares not refuse to swallow, by abusive ridicule of the physician and his medicines, knowing that this will not, so long as he does but take the drugs, diminish their efficacy; so, the votary of superstition profanely jests with the observance he dares not put aside. Thus it is that superstition generates profaneness.

The best that can be said of any outward forms, in themselves harmless, is that they are *well* calculated to cherish feelings of rational devotion; the worst that can be said of any of these, is that they are peculiarly *liable* to become superstitious.

To disjoin the means of grace from the fruits of grace, is to convert a sacrament into a charm.

Empty forms convert the natural food of religion into its poison.

The more our religion becomes a religion of visible objects, the more it becomes a religion of outward worship. The *same* tendency which makes men put the sign of an unseen object in the place of that object, makes them put the sign of inward worship in the place of inward worship.

It is the general tendency of human nature to substitute the *means* of grace for the *fruits* of grace.

Superstition, in all its various forms and degrees, is not merely a folly to be ridiculed, but a mischief to be dreaded.

Superstition is the more dangerous, from its providing an exercise for the natural and original sentiment of religion in the human mind; and satisfying, by the practice of superstitious ceremonies, this natural craving, (so to speak,) after Divine worship; thus, more easily extinguishing true piety, setting the conscience at rest, and preoccupying, by an idol, God's place in the heart.

Religion is the medicine of the soul, and our spiritual enemy knows that superstition is the specific poison that may most easily be blended with it, and will the most completely destroy its efficacy.

He who rashly gives heed to superstitious delusions, errs not from *excess* of *faith*, but from want of faith; for what is

true in his belief, he receives not *because* it is *true*, — but because it agrees with some prejudice or fancy of his own: and he is right, where he *is* right, only by chance. Having violated the spirit of the First Commandment, by regarding what is human with the veneration due to that only which is Divine, his worship, even of the true God, becomes an abomination. He has set up idols in his heart, and "the Lord, the jealous God, will set His face against that man."

Where anything, not in itself moral or religious, is *connected* with religion, Superstition fastens upon that, because it is "worldly," and lets the rest go. Thus, when God's justice is described in Scripture as vengeance, to show us that it pursues the offender as sternly as a revengeful man *would* pursue his enemy, Superstition fastens on the thought of God's thirsting for *revenge*, and regards sin only as an offence which provokes in God a desire of inflicting pain on somebody. Again, when water, or bread and wine, are made *signs* of the power of the Holy Spirit, or of Christ's body and blood sacrificed for us, superstition fastens on the water, or the bread and wine, as if they were the things themselves. When a place must be set apart for Divine worship, Superstition fancies that God dwells in that *place*, rather than in the hearts of the worshippers. When pictures or images of holy persons are set before us, Superstition fastens on the image, as if it were the reality. When rites or ceremonies are used to *express* our devotion, Superstition *makes* them our devotion. When prayers have to be *said*, Superstition makes the *saying* them, prayer. When good books are to be perused, Superstition makes the perusal, edification. When works are to be done *from a good motive*, Superstition makes the outward action the good work. When suffering *for righteousness' sake* is commended, Superstition takes the suffering for merit;

and so in many other instances. It seizes ever on the outward—on that which is not moral; on that which strikes the senses or the imagination — and fastens there; while true religion, on the contrary, calls on us to "lift up our hearts" from the earthly to the heavenly, and use the outward, as a help to the inward.

Let but the stock of genuine Christianity shoot vigorously, and then its shoots will starve the superstitions that have been *grafted* in it.

XI. The Love of Novelty.

The love of novelty — the pleasure men have in the idea of being original thinkers, or at least of being able to shake off established prejudices—often impede the pursuit of truth for its own sake, and make it a secondary object.

A man who is excessive in his dread of excessive deference, will be very apt to fall into the opposite extreme of courting paradox and striving after originality.

Some men are zealous for truth, provided it be truth brought to light by themselves.

As custom will often blind men to the good, as well as to the evil effects, of any long established system, we must never alter for the mere sake of altering, nor indulge the craving after novelty for its own sake.

In philosophy, the pursuit of novelty and of truth may often chance to coincide; in religion, seldom, if ever.

There are two kinds of "New Truth" and of "Discovery," the distinction between which is most important. First, such truths as were, before they were discovered, absolutely unknown, being not implied by anything we previously knew. Such are all *matters of fact*, strictly so called, when first made known to one who had not any such previous knowledge, as would enable him to ascertain them *a priori; i. e.*, by reasoning; as, if we inform a man that we have a colony in New South Wales. The communication of this kind of knowledge is properly called information. We gain it from *observation* and from *testimony*. No *mere internal workings* of our own minds, or mere discussions in words, will make such a fact known to us, though there is great room for sagacity *in judging what testimony to admit*, and in the forming of conjectures, that may lead to profitable observation. The other class of discoveries is of a very different nature. That which may be elicited by reasoning, and consequently is implied in that which we already know, we assent to on that ground, and not from observation or testimony. To all practical purposes, indeed, a truth of this description may be as completely unknown to us as the others; but as soon as it is set before us, and the argument by which it is connected with our previous notions made clear, we recognize it as something conformable to, and contained in our former belief. We are conscious that we possess in what we already know, the means to ascertain the truth of it, that we have a right, in short, to bear our testimony to its truth.

Suppose there is a vein of metal on a man's estate, which he does not know of; is it part of his possessions or not? and when he finds it out and works it, does he then *acquire*

a new possession or not? Certainly not a new possession in the same sense as if he had a fresh estate bequeathed to him, which he had formerly no *right* to; but to all practical purposes, it *is* a new possession. Again, reasoning has been aptly compared to the piling together blocks of stone; on each of which, as on a pedestal, a man can raise himself a small, and but a small, height above the plain; but which when skilfully built up, will form a flight of steps, which will raise him to a great elevation. Now, (to pursue this analogy,) when the materials are all ready to the builder's hand, the blocks ready, dug, and brought, his work resembles one of the two kinds of discovery just mentioned, viz., that to which we have assigned the name of *instruction:* but if his materials are to be entirely, or in part, provided by himself —if he himself is forced to dig fresh blocks from the quarry —this corresponds to the other kind of discovery.

"Man," says the illustrious Lord Bacon, "having the office of attending on nature, and studying to ascertain her meaning, (*naturæ minister et interpres,*) is limited in his knowledge and his power by the observations he has made of the course of nature: for nature can be controlled only by submitting to her laws: in all our performances we can do nothing more than apply or remove bodies already existing: the rest, nature accomplishes." Just so with Revelation. Man,—*i. e.*, uninspired man, — by attentive study of the Scriptures, may learn much of God's dealings with our race, and of His gracious offers and promises; and may so apply this knowledge, and avail himself of those offers, as to become "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus;" but he can no more make or alter a revelation, than he can set aside the physical laws of the universe.

A new Truth, in the sense of something neither expressly nor virtually asserted before—not implied (involved) in anything already known—cannot be properly looked for in religion. A full and final revelation having been made, no discovery, properly so called, of any high importance is to be expected; not merely because the Book, which contains all we know of the Divine will, has been so long before us (for so also has the book of nature, in which nevertheless we are daily reading new truths, which had escaped the researches of our predecessors), but because that Book was designed by the Almighty to convey such instruction as He judged needful for all, which purpose it would not have answered, if its true sense and doctrine were not understood by any for so many centuries. Could it be materially altered by any new mode of interpretation from what has been uniformly received, it cannot be called (at least a final) *revelation*. Elucidation, indeed, of minor points may be looked for, and be very valuable; fresh topics of evidence may be expected (in these later times) to supply the defect of recent miracles — prophecies may become intelligible by their fulfilment — and fresh arguments in support of the essential doctrines may be brought forward. All this furnishes ample scope for the utmost conceivable ingenuity and originality of thought, and the unremitting labours of a whole life would be insufficient for accomplishing all that would be desirable on each of these points; so that no excuse is left for indolence and continued ignorance; — but still, unless our faith be the same in the main with that of the early Christians, we may be well assured that it is unsound.

The temptation of novelty cannot be too sedulously guarded against, when we consider how powerful a principle of human nature that must be, which could seduce even the hearers of

the Apostles themselves; who were led away by daring innovators, corrupting, with their own devices, the pure stream of Divine truth, even close to the fountain head.

We must beware of an idle craving after novelties of our own devising, while the infallible and *final* revelation of God's will is before us; and studiously repressing all care to be "wise above that which is written," endeavour to divert into some other channel, any eager desire we may naturally and reasonably feel for discovering, what may strictly be called, new truths. A boundless field lies open before us, nor need we fear that the stores of useful knowledge to be drawn from the study of nature and of science, will ever be exhausted.

XII. The Dread of Innovation.

A MISTAKEN dread of Innovation causes men to overlook the errors that are, in reality, the greatest innovations.

The maxim, almost universally admitted, that there is so strong a love of novelty for its own sake, in the human mind, as to attach a character of danger to any change, though in itself small, and harmless or beneficial, seems scarcely borne out by experience. History records no event that indicates such a principle in human nature as a fondness for change for its own sake. Man's love of novelty belongs to recreation, and ornaments, and the like; not to the serious concerns of life, in which the mass of mankind are wedded to established usages and institutions, even when they have nothing but custom to recommend them.

As men are found tolerating in houses they have long inhabited, the inconvenience of some ill-planned door, or window, or passage, when the remedy would be easy; while in a newly-built house, if any like inconvenience were found, an alteration would be made instantly, so it is in legislation and all human affairs. Recent experiment may bring to light and exaggerate the defects of a new system, but *long* familiarity blinds us to those very defects.

An anecdote is told of a gentleman, who, being entangled in the intricacies of the numberless windings of the deep and shady Devonshire lanes, trotted briskly on, in the hope that he should at length come to some house whose inhabitants would direct him, or to some more open spot from which he could take a survey of the different roads, and observe whither they led. He proceeded a long time in this manner, encouraged by observing, as he advanced, the prints of horses' feet, which indicated that he was in no unfrequented track: and these becoming continually more and more numerous, the further he went, he accordingly paid the less anxious attention to the bearings of the country, from increasing assurance that he was in the right way. But still he saw neither house nor human creature, and at length, the recurrence of the same objects by the roadside opened his eyes to the fact, that all this time, misled by the multitude of the turnings, he had been riding in a circle; and that the foot-marks, the sight of which had so cheered him, were those of *his own horse;* their number, of course, increasing with every circuit he took. Had he not fortunately made this discovery, perhaps he might have been riding there now. Are not men in many parts of their conduct in life, liable thus to follow the track of their own footsteps, to set them-

selves an example, — and to flatter themselves that they are going right, from their conformity to their own precedent?

There is always a tendency to appeal, with the same kind of deference, to the authority of "old times," as to that of aged men, from associating with "old times," the impression of the superior wisdom resulting from experience, which, as a general rule, we attribute to old *men*. Yet no one is really ignorant that the world is older now than ever it was, and that the instruction to be derived from observation on the past must be greater, supposing other things equal, to every successive generation.

It will often be found that the same truths, which when stated generally, are regarded as truisms not worth mentioning, will, in their practical application, appear revolting paradoxes.

In many a case of innovation, it might be found that what is new is not wrong, and what is wrong is not new.

Seeming innovations are really restorations, returns to the right course, by the sudden correction of great errors, resulting from the accumulation of imperceptibly small ones. A striking instance is afforded in "the change of the style." Such restoration is but the scouring of a room, removing, in an hour or two, the dirt which had been gathering for several days, which is only called *keeping it clean*, not changing it.

At the time of the Reformation, how startling was the idea that there could be *several* independent churches, owing no allegiance to the successors of Peter! Yet, in awaking from

their first surprise, men found the novelty to be just the restoration of the primitive state of things, the following of apostolic example; so it is with many a thing that is cried up, or cried down, as a novelty.

Hurtful and extensive changes are often attributed to harmless and trifling ones — *Post hoc; ergo, propter hoc.* But though many instances may be found of small alterations being *followed* by great and mischievous ones, it is doubtful whether all history can furnish a single instance of the greater innovation having been, properly speaking, *caused* by the lesser.

The best security against revolution is in constant correction of abuses, and introduction of needed improvements. It is the neglect of *timely repair* that makes *rebuilding* necessary.

To show that the present is not the *fittest conceivable* occasion for making a certain change in itself advisable,—that a better occasion may be *imagined*, or that a better occasion is past,—that the Sibylline books might have been purchased cheaper some time ago, is not enough to justify indefinite procrastination: it is requisite to show also that a more suitable occasion is likely to arise; and how soon; and again, that it will have been worth waiting for; and moreover, that men, when it does come, will be more disposed to take advantage of it.

To conceive a system — whether actually existing or ideal —so framed *as to keep* itself in good order, is to be beset by the same chimerical hope, in human affairs, that has misled so many speculators in mechanics,—the vain expectation of attaining the perpetual motion.

To say that no change shall take place is to pretend to control the course of the sun. To say that none shall occur except such as are undesigned, and accidental, is to say, that though the clock may gain or lose indefinitely, at least we take care it shall never be regulated. "And since," says Bacon, "things alter for the worse spontaneously, if they be never altered for the better designedly, when is the evil to end?"

The remedy of a remedy is a change far more easily to be brought about than the first change; and, therefore, the imperfect remedying of a bad law is in itself hopeful. While the morter is wet, a building is more readily altered.

No opinion is to be received simply because it is *old*, or simply because it is *new;* but only because it is *true.* We must equally beware of venturing rashly on untrodden paths, without a careful survey of the country, and of following in too confident security, *the track of our own footsteps.*

XIII. Undue Deference to Human Authority.

The great body of mankind show their humbleness of mind, by submitting themselves to man, instead of to God.

To believe as others believe, is a compendious creed, taxing neither a man's intellect, nor his industry;—a creed resulting from the indolence — the spiritual carelessness, — the weakness and the dishonest ambition of human nature.

Orthodoxy, which, strictly speaking, means right faith, in popular language, means conformity to what is generally *received* as the right faith.

The reference so often made to the words of Vincentius Lirinensis,—"*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus, &c.*"—seems altogether unaccountable. That whatever is believed, and always has been, by all Christians everywhere, is a part of the Christian faith, is a truism, as barren as it is undeniable. It cannot possibly be called in to solve *any question in dispute*, since, by its own character, it relates expressly and exclusively to such points as *never* have been disputed among Christians.

Authority, (in the sense of power,) in reference to any *particular* act or decision, does not admit of *degrees;* while, on the other hand, authority, in the sense of *a claim to deference*, admits of infinite degrees; and, therefore, an appeal to an undefined authority of a vast and *indefinite* number of writers, extending over a very long and *indefinite* space of time, is, indeed, to set up a standard inaccessible from its very vagueness.

It is no uncommon mistake, to imagine many witnesses to be bearing *concurrent* testimony to the *same* thing, when in truth they are attesting different things. Multitudes may agree in maintaining some system or doctrine which perhaps one out of a million may have convinced himself of, by reason and reflection; while the rest have assented to it in implicit reliance on authority. One or two men may be bearing original testimony to some fact or transaction; and one or two *hundred* who are repeating what they have heard from them, may be, in reality, only bearing witness to their *having*

heard it, and to their own belief. The shops supply us with abundance of busts and prints of some great man, all striking likenesses—of each other.

As, when a prevailing current in particular spots sets strongly towards certain shoals, we must expect that many vessels will strike on them; so when the passions and prejudices of man tend towards some particular errors, it must be expected that such errors will generally prevail; the presumption therefore is rather, if anything, against taking as authority the prevailing opinions.

Who were the orthodox, and who were the true worshippers in Israel, when Elijah alone was left of the Lord's prophets, while Baal's prophets were four hundred and fifty men?

The exercise of private judgment in religious matters, is a right, but not a right that a man through modesty may waive; for it is not more a right than a duty — nay, it is a right *because* it is a duty; but were we to waive all consideration as to the right, and as to the duty, the important point remains of its *necessity*.

The right of private judgment, is one, which, God has not merely given permission, that men *may* exercise, but made provision that they *must*. We may refrain from exercising it on this or that particular point, but it is only to transfer it to another point. For instance, a man distrusting his own knowledge of medicine, may refrain from exercising any judgment as to the remedies he should use, and may put himself wholly in the hands of a physician: that is, he judges that a physician is needful, and that such and such a practitioner is worthy of confidence. Or supposing he dis-

trusts his own judgment on this point also, then, he consults some friend, whom he judges to be trustworthy, as to what physician he shall employ. On any matters in which a man takes serious interest, such as religious matters, he can avoid exercising private judgment, only by withdrawing his attention as much as possible from the whole subject, except as far as regards outward observances and forms.

Some momentous questions must first have been decided by private judgment, even by those who surrender it to human guidance. 1st. Whether there is a God. 2nd. Whether Christianity comes from God. 3rd. Whether they shall submit to human guidance; and, 4th. Whose guidance it shall be.

If we *are* competent to judge who our guide is to be, then our alleged unfitness for the exercise of private judgment is done away. If we are *not* competent to judge who is to be; then, though we may admit the necessity of an infallible guide, we can never be sure that we have found one. Every thing will depend on the reasons we may have for trusting him; for no building can be more firm than the foundation it rests on.

To leave important questions to be decided, in the first instance, by those who are, by supposition, incompetent judges, and who for that very reason are to rely implicitly on an infallible guide, is to tell them that because they cannot steer their course without a pilot, they must make a voyage to a distant port in order to find one.

It seems somewhat strange, that it is always by some *reason* or other, that men seek to persuade men to *renounce*

their reason, to *argue* men into *neglecting arguments*, and *prove* to them that they *cannot judge* of proofs. They forget that their objections, as lying against the *proofs of reasoning itself*, universally, will, therefore, of course apply to those very arguments they are themselves adducing. They are acting like the woodman, who had mounted a tree, and, who was so earnestly employed in cutting the boughs, that he unconsciously cut off the bough on which he was standing.

To follow imperfect, uncertain, or corrupted traditions, in order to avoid erring in our own judgment, is but to exchange one danger for another.

It is said that, some years ago, there was a bridge at Bath in so crazy a condition that persons chose rather to make a long circuit than run the risk of crossing it. One day, however, a very nervous lady, hurrying home to dress for the evening, came suddenly upon the spot, without, till that moment, remembering the danger. What was she to do? If she went on, the frail arch might give way umder her; to go round would be fatiguing, and attended with loss of time. She stood for some minutes trembling in anxious hesitation; at last a lucky thought occurred to her — she called for a sedan chair, and was *carried over* in that conveyance!

Now, when people, who think to escape the danger of having to judge for themselves in religious matters, by choosing to take some guide as an infallible one, and believe or disbelieve as he bids them, thus adding, to the undiminished previous chances of error, the additional chances against the authority they have chosen, — what is this but putting, not only their own weight, but that of the sedan chair also, on the tottering arch?

For any error we adopt on our guide's authority; and, furthermore, for bowing to his guidance without good proof of his legitimate authority, we shall have to answer to Him who has called upon us to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." We are responsible, not only for doing, but also for leaving undone; else the servant who hid his Lord's talent in the earth would have escaped condemnation.

There is no real humility in the fancied renunciation of private judgment for submission to an infallible human authority. Though the gnomon of a sun-dial has no power of itself to indicate the hour, yet when the sun shines on it, the motions of its shadow must be as correct as those of the sun's rays which it follows; and in like manner he is infallible, actually and practically, in his belief, even while speaking of himself as fallible, who always believes precisely what an infallible Church or leader believes.

Pretenders to infallibility in religion have this advantage (if it is to be reckoned one) over other quacks, that the mischief which they do cannot be fully known till the great day. They make promises about the unseen world, and the victims of their deceit cannot come back from the grave to warn others. Hence, the belief in an infallible guidance is much more common in religious matters, than in the affairs of this world, where experience soon detects such impostors or vain fancies.

The guides on whom, as the wise and learned, the mass of the people are implicitly to rely, soon become *un*wise and *un*learned, because there is none to detect their deficiencies; they become ignorant of Scripture, because left to be its authoritative interpreters. Their proper office being to train

their less enlightened brethren to "give a reason of the hope that is in them," they save themselves this labour by training them to do without a reason.

The instructors of a people need far more knowledge than their oracles.

That it is not the will of God, that man should have recourse to any human infallible tribunal, is at once the simplest, and the most decisive argument against doing so; and that it is not His will, is determined, by the fact that no such tribunal exists. Our conjecture that, in a Divine dispensation, a provision is requisite, and therefore to be expected, for a power of infallibly interpreting Scripture, and deciding finally all questions that may arise, cannot alter facts. If we are to infer the existence of a miracle, because *we* conclude it to be important, we make ourselves the standard for the Divine procedure.

Since the very purpose for which an infallible guide is supposed to be needed, is the removal of all reasonable doubt, it is plain that if God had thought fit to provide us with such a guide, He would not have left it at all doubtful, where we are to look for that guide.

Supposing the Apostles and their Divine Master had really regarded it as a part—and it must have been a most essential part, if one at all—of the Christian system; had they really designed that there should be, for the Universal Church, any institution answering to the Oracle of God at the Tabernacle, it is wholly incredible, that the Lord Jesus Himself should be perpetually spoken of as the Head of His Church, without any reference to any supreme authority on earth, to any

human body as His representative and vicegerent. Now they do not merely omit all such reference, but they omit it in such a manner, and under such circumstances, as plainly to amount to an exclusion. A ship was about to sail for a certain harbour without the captain, who had been usually the commander, but who was then called to serve elsewhere. He came on board to take leave, and to warn the officers and others of the dangerous rocks and shoals, which, to his knowledge, beset the entrance; exhorting them to keep a good look-out, and also to enquire carefully into the character of any pilot who might offer his services; as some, he was certain, were in league with wreckers and would purposely steer the ship on rocks, that these wretches might plunder the wreck. And if we were told, there was, *to his knowledge*, a *light-house* erected there, as a sure land-mark; and a ship could not go wrong, that did but steer straight for that; should we not at once exclaim, that since *he said not a word* of this, he must be either a fool or a knave? And on being assured that he was an eminently wise and good man, and thoroughly well informed, we should say, "Then this story of the light-house must be a fiction."

And now look at Paul's farewell (Acts xx. 29—31) to the elders at Miletus, where, in the immediate prospect of death, warning his disciples of the dangers to which they would be exposed, and showing them how to meet them, he said not one word of any infallible judge or tribunal, but only exhorted them to watch, and remember what had been taught them.

The natural result of compulsory cessation of discussion is an apathetic tranquillity, an indolent, uninquiring acquiescence best characterized by the expression, "Seeing then,

that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet."

The craving for infallibillity is only, an enquiry after some mode of exemption from all further enquiry; only, a care to obtain relief from all further need of care; only, a navigation in search of some safe haven, in which the helm may be abandoned, and the vessel left to ride securely, without any need of watching the winds and currents, and of looking out for shoals and rocks; only, a hope to acquire a release from all necessity of vigilant circumspection. Can we wonder, then, that all that ministers to such a principle should meet with ready acceptance from human indolence and spiritual carelessness?

The abstaining from all reasoning and all investigation, does not always secure freedom from all uneasy doubt — a desire for which creates the craving for infallibillity. Once granted that the church, sect, or leader, we have taken as our guide, is perfectly infallible, and there is an end of all doubts respecting particular points; but this is, in effect, to shut out what may be merely apparent doubts, only to leave room for one great and real doubt which pervades the whole. An uneasy doubt will sometimes haunt a man, — in spite of his efforts to repress it, and however strenuously he may deny, even to himself, its existence, whether the infallibility claimed, which is the foundation of the whole building, be itself really well established, — a suspicion will occasionally cross the mind, however strenuously repelled, "*Is there not a lie in my right hand?*" And the reluctance often shown to examine the foundation, and ascertain whether it is really sound, is an indication not of full confidence in its firmness, but of a lurking suspicion that it will not bear examining.

The faith of those who depend on the authority of living guides now, is plainly quite different from the faith of the early Christians, who relied upon the testimony of the competent witnesses who were then living. Those then, who ground their faith upon the testimony of those same witnesses preserved in the writings of the New Testament, really follow the example of the early Church, and "are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone."

As the Christian minister should teach as Divine Truth, that only which *he* is convinced is scriptural, so his hearers should receive as Divine Truth, *that* only which *they* are convinced is scriptural.

To give to the decisions of any uninspired man, or body of men, that implicit deference due to the declarations and precepts of Holy Scripture, and due to nothing else, is not humble piety, but profane presumption.

The Scriptures are not merely like the elementary propositions in mathematics, the first step and foundation of proof, but the *only* source of proof.

To refer to the formularies of a Church as tests of the fitness of persons to be members of it, is allowable and expedient; but to refer for the proof or disproof of doctrines solely or chiefly, to any, the most justly venerated, human authority, is to rob Scripture of its due dignity and proper office, and go so far on the way to establish the dangerous and encroaching precedent, of substituting human authority for Divine.

If any human interpretation or comment is to be received implicitly and without appeal, it is placed practically, as far as relates to everything except a mere question of *dignity*, on a level with Scripture. Among the Parliamentarians at the time of the civil war, there were many, at first a great majority, who professed to obey the king's commands, as *notified to them by Parliament*, and levied forces in the king's name, against his person. If any one admitted Parliament to be the sole and authoritative interpreter and expounder of the regal commands, and this, without any check from any other power, it is plain that he virtually admitted the sovereignty of that Parliament, just as much as if he had recognized their formal deposition of the king.

As in the attempt to make both gold and silver the standard of currency, it will be found that any variation, however slight or however unfrequent, in their relative value, is sufficient to throw all accounts into confusion; so the endeavor at conformity in doctrine to the scriptural and the orthodox, is to strive for an unattainable object, unattainable for the same reason that no man can serve two masters, not because they are necessarily leading opposite ways, but simply because they are two and not one.

However near the adherents of the "orthodox" and the "scriptural" respectively may appear in regard of the doctrines which they hold, still they go on different principles, like one man going by the clock, and another by the sundial. And he who aims at conforming to each of *two* standards, is "a double-minded man," and will be "unstable in all his ways."

Divine Truth must be no more taught as the commandments of men, than the commandments of men as Divine Truth.

Human teaching in religion is highly useful so long as Scripture proof is readily produced. It bears the same relation to Scripture, that what is called paper-currency does to gold and silver. Its sole value lies in the knowledge that it is convertible, on demand, into the precious metal it represents.

The claim to infallibility for human decisions, and the comparative disregard to Scripture, are the effect, not the cause, of that tendency to pay undue deference to human authority, from which, arising as it does in the principles of our nature, we can never be secure but by continual self-distrust, and by referring at every step "to the Law and to the Testimony,"—continually tracing up the stream of religious knowledge to the pure fountain-head of Scripture. The care, and diligence, and patient thought, and watchful observation, required for this drawing for ourselves the Christian truths, will be repaid, by our having through Divine grace, those truths ultimately fixed in the heart, as well as in the understanding. We shall not only "read," but, "mark, learn, and inwardly digest" them, so that the heavenly nourishment will enter into our whole frame, and make us not merely sound theologians, but sincere Christians, and good men, truly "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

In guarding against excessive deference and exclusive regard to authority of persons, rather than arguments, (which is undoubtedly one of the chief fallacies against which men ought to be cautioned,) it should not be forgotten, that if the opposite mode of judging, in every case, were to be adopted without limitation, it is plain that children could not be educated. Indeed, happily for the world, most of them who

should be allowed to proceed on this plan, would, in consequence, perish in childhood. A pious Christian, again, has the same implicit reliance on his God, even when unable to judge of the reasonableness of His commands and dispensations, as a dutiful and affectionate child has on a tender parent. Now though such a man is, of course, regarded by an Atheist as weak and absurd, it is surely on account of his *belief*, not of his consequent conduct, that he is so regarded. Even Atheists would in general admit that he is acting reasonably, on the supposition that there is a God, who has revealed Himself to man.

He who renounces all pretensions to infallibility, whether an immediate, and personal, or a derived infallibility, by owning himself to be neither impeccable nor infallible, and by consenting to undergo the trials of vigilance and of patience, which God has appointed for him, need not fear to forfeit by this the attainment of truth—all cheerful hope of final salvation, — all "joy and peace in believing." On the contrary, while such as have sought for peace — for mental tranquillity and satisfaction—rather than for truth, will often fail both of truth and peace; he who seeks truth first, is more likely to attain both, from his gracious Master. He has bid us watch and pray; He has taught us, through His blessed Apostle to "take heed to ourselves," and to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling;" and He has declared that He "worketh in us;" He has bid us "rejoice in hope;" He has promised that He will not suffer us to be "tempted above that we are able to bear;" and He has taught us to look forward to the time, when we shall no longer see as by means of a mirror "darkly," but "face to face;"—when we shall know, not "in part," but "even as we are known;"—when faith shall be succeeded by certainty, and hope be

ripened into enjoyment. His precepts and his promises go together; His support and comfort are given to those who seek for them in the way He has himself appointed.

XIV. The Love of Approbation and the Dread of Censure.

Human approbation is a very good thing, when it happens to come incidentally; but it must never be made an object. The desire of truth must reign supreme, and everything else be welcomed only if coming in her train.

Deference for the (supposed) wise and good, and love of approbation, are two very distinct things, though in practice very difficult to be distinguished. The former may be felt towards those whom we never can meet with—who, perhaps, were dead, ages before we were born, and survive only in their writings. A man's desire to find himself in agreement with Aristotle, or Bacon, or Locke, or Paley, &c., however misplaced, or excessive, can have nothing to do with their approval of *him*. But when he is glad to concur with some living friends, whom he thinks highly of, and dreads to differ from, then, it is very difficult to decide how far this feeling is the *presumption framed by his judgment*, in favour of the correctness of their views; and how far it is the desire of their approbation and sympathy, and dread of the reverse. It is the desire of personal approbation, the excessive care concerning what is thought of himself, that the lover of truth is bound so severely to check.

The lover of Truth, for its own sake, must set himself to *act* as if he cared nothing for either censure or approval, and in time he gets hardened as the Canadians do to walking in snow-shoes (raquets). At first a man is almost crippled with the "*mal au raquet*," — the pain and swelling of the feet; but the prescription is to *go on* walking in them, as if you felt nothing at all, and in a few days you do feel nothing. And this will always be the case, more or less, through God's help, with him who earnestly seeks to act unto the Lord and not unto men, if he will persevere, and *persevere from a right motive.*

Much eloquence and ingenuity is often exerted, in descanting on the propriety of not being wholly indifferent to the opinions formed of one — the impossibility of eradicating the regard for approbation — and the folly of attempting it, or pretending to it, &c. Now this is all very true; the propensity to desire to gain approval and escape censure, we are not called on to extirpate, (that being, I conceive, impossible;) but our care and pains are better bestowed in *keeping under* the feeling, than in *vindicating* it. It must be treated like the grass on a lawn which you wish to keep in good order; you neither attempt nor wish to *destroy* the grass; but you *mow* it down from time to time, as close as you possibly can, well trusting that there will be quite enough left, and that it will be sure to grow again.

To obtain the approbation of the wise and good by doing what is right, simply *because* it is right, is most gratifying to that natural and allowable wish, to escape the censure and claim the approval of our fellow-creatures; but to make this gratification, either wholly or partly, our object—to hold up a finger *on purpose* to gain the applause of the whole world,

is unjustifiable. One difficulty in acting on this principle is, that it often is even a duty to seek the good opinion of others, not as an *ultimate* object for its own sake, but for the sake of influencing them for their own benefit, and that of others. "Let your light *so* shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven." But we are to watch and analyse the MOTIVES of even actions which we are sure are in themselves right. And this is a kind of vigilance which human nature is always struggling to escape. One class of men are satisfied so long as they *do* what is justifiable; — what may be done from a good motive and when *so* done *would* be right, and which therefore may be satisfactorily defended. Another class — the ascetic — are for cutting off every thing that *may* be a snare. They have heard of "the deceitfulness of riches," and so they vow poverty; which is less trouble than *watching their motives* in gaining and spending money. And so on with the rest. But if we would cut off all temptation, we must cut off our heads at once.

Neither human applause, nor human censure, is to be taken as the test of truth; but either should set us upon testing ourselves.

XV. MISTAKEN REGARD TO UNITY.

AGREEMENT in religion is not genuine Christian concord, unless it be agreement in the genuine religion of the Gospel.

Those who reach truth will reach unity; for truth is *one*. But men may, and often do, gain unity without truth—which

is so far from being a good that it is a great evil. It makes falsehood strong, and the professors of it contented in their error.

"No man can serve two masters," because when they are radically opposed "he will love the one and hate the other;" and because, even though not necessarily opposed, they are not necessarily combined; and cases will sometimes arise, in which he must "cleave to the one and despise" (disregard, and neglect) "the other." There is not anything necesarily wrong in aiming at temporal advantages. But whoever has resolved on obtaining wealth in one way or in another, will sometimes be led to violate duty; and he, again, who is fully bent on "seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," will sometimes find himself called on to renounce temporal advantages, which, through the honesty, frugality, and temperance which he had practised from higher motives, he may have attained. And so it is with the occasionally-rival claims of truth and of unity, or of any two objects which may possibly be in some instances opposed. We must make up our minds which, is, in that case, to give way. One must be the supreme — must be the "master."

A mistaken notion of the Christian unity spoken of in the Scriptures, which represents it as consisting in having *one community on earth* to which all Christians belong or ought to belong, and to whose government all are bound to submit, has led to truth being made the secondary, and not the paramount object.

The Church is undoubtedly *one*, and so is the human race *one;* but not as a society, for as such, it is only *one*, when considered as to its future existence. Its present unity con-

sists in that its various societies are designed to be modelled on the same principles, and to enjoy common privileges; "One Lord, one faith, one baptism;" and all forming part of that great society of which the Head is in heaven, and of which many of the members only "live unto God" or exist in His counsels; some having long since departed, and some being not yet born. The term unity is applicable to the Universal Church, as one in reference to its Supreme Head in heaven, not as one community on earth, as the human race is one in respect of the One Creator and Governor; but this does not make it *one family or one state.*

The Apostles founded Christian Churches, all based on the same principles, and having the same object in view, but all quite independent of each other. And while, by the inspiration of Him who knew what was in man, they delineated those Christian principles, which man could not have devised for himself, each Church has been left by the same Divine foresight, to make the application of those principles in its symbols, its forms of worship, and its ecclesiastical regulations; and while steering its course by the chart and compass, which His holy Word supplies, to regulate for itself the sails and rudder, according to the winds and currents it may meet with. Now I have little doubt, that the sort of variation resulting from this independence and freedom, so far from breaking the bond of peace is the best preservative of it. A number of neighbouring families, living in perfect unity, will be thrown into discord as soon as you compel them to form one family, and to observe in things intrinsically indifferent, the same rules: one *e. g.*, likes early hours, and another late; one likes the windows open and another shut; and thus by being brought too close together, they are driven into ill-will, by one being perpetually forced to give way to another.

Of this character were the disputations which arose (though they subsequently assumed a different character) about church-music, the posture of the communicants, the colours of a minister's dress, the time of keeping Easter, &c. &c.

To vindicate our own or any other Church not on the reasonable ground, that they are not at variance with gospel-principles, or with any Divine injunction designed to be of universal obligation, but on the ground of the exact conformity, which it is notorious they do not possess, to the most ancient models, and even to go beyond this and condemn all Christians whose institutions and ordinances are not "one and utterly like" our own, on the ground of their departure from the apostolical precedent, which no Church has exactly adhered to — does seem, to use no harsher expression, not a little inconsistent and unreasonable. This principle would go to exclude at once from the pale of Christ's Church, almost every Christian body, since the first two or three centuries.

Any system that makes unity the primary and indispensable object to which all else must be sacrificed, robs its adherents of the character of witnesses; while minor differences make all the more undeniable and real, the testimony from the agreement in essential truth of persons left free to examine. The testimony (to use a simple and obvious illustration) of even a small number of *eye-witnesses* of any transaction, even though possessing no extraordinary powers of vision, would outweigh that of countless millions, who should have resolved to close their eyes, and to receive and retail the report they heard from a single individual.

Our religion was designed to renew indeed, but not to sub-

vert our nature—to exalt and purify each individual, but not to destroy his individuality. Whatever points are faulty, indeed, must be corrected by our religion, or it will not have done its proper work; but many differences of taste and temper still remain, (and will give a certain tinge, even to the religion itself of each man,) which are in nowise hurtful, but may even be rendered serviceable to the general cause,—and which ought no more to be made a source of mutual jealousy and dissension, than the diversity of spiritual gifts among the early Christians.

We must carefully guard against confounding intellectual deficiencies with heretical perversity of will, remembering that the honest endeavours after religious knowledge, the sincere faith and diligent obedience of those of feeble understanding or of uncultivated mind, are accepted by Him, in whose sight the wisest and ablest are but mere weakness and ignorance.

The principle of sacrificing truth to unity creeps in gradually. The sacrifice *first* demanded, is in general, not a great one. Men are led on step by step, from silence as to some mistake, to connivance at fallacies, and thence to suppression, and then to misrepresentation of truth, and ultimately, to the support of known falsehood.

Unity, when made the first object, is always an evil, since, besides the possibility that men may be united in what is erroneous and wrong in itself, it must be remembered, that whatever absolute truth there may be in what is assented to on such a principle, it is not truth, to those who assent to it not on conviction but for union's sake.

Peace is too dearly purchased by slavery of any kind, especially spiritual slavery.

Controversy, though always an evil in itself, is sometimes a necessary evil.

To give up everything that is worth contending about, in order to prevent hurtful contentions, is, for the sake of extirpating noxious weeds, to condemn the field to perpetual sterility.

Though the recollection that all sincere Christians have a common cause to maintain against falsehood, should not prevent us from pointing out the errors of our fellow Christians, yet it should certainly influence the *manner* of our doing so.

As controversy should always be regarded as an evil in itself, to be incurred only when necessary for the sake of important good, this principle acted upon would alone exclude three different classes of subjects, all calculated to gender strife; those which relate to matters, first, too deep and mysterious; or, secondly, too minute and trifling; or, thirdly, too *speculative* and remote from Christian practice.

The agitation of questions respecting the hidden counsels and nature of the Most High, has a peculiar tendency to gender strife; for in a case where correct knowledge is impossible to any, and where all are, in fact, in the wrong, there is but little likelihood of agreement; like men who should rashly venture to explore a strange land in utter darkness, they will be scattered into a thousand devious paths.

Those who, having magnified into serious evils, by injudicious opposition, heresies in themselves insignificant, yet appeal to the magnitude of those evils to prove that their opposition was called for, act like unskilful physicians, who, when by violent remedies, they have aggravated a trifling disease into a dangerous one, urge the violence of the symptoms which they themselves have produced in justification of their practice.

Men are usually no less jealous of *names* than of things; it is therefore wise as well as charitable, not to insist, when the substance of truth is secured, on their adopting any form of stating it, offensive to them.

So important are words in influencing our thoughts, and so great is their ambiguity, that no caution can be too great in the use of language in religious discussions, if we would not lay the foundation of incurable and most mischievous perplexity.

He who in any discussion with those who differ from him, desires to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, had better begin with the points of agreement, rather than of difference; and to point out, and give them full credit for whatever truths may belong to their system, instead of confining himself to its errors. For there cannot be any profitable discussion between parties, who, not agreed in *some* thing, have no common ground to stand upon. Who will admit the conclusion that has not admitted the premises? Moreover, falsehood can never gain assent except by being mixed up with some truth; like a poison disguised in some wholesome substance. And as truth cannot of itself lead to error, but only to other truths which legiti-

mately follow from it, the most effectual way of decomposing (to use a chemical expression) such a mixture, is, to ascertain first, the true portion of it, and show that this has no necessary connexion with the falsehood with which it has been combined.

The universal and constant liability, to forget in the heat of controversy every thing but the matter in debate, to think of nothing but of proving the present point, and to resort to any means of accomplishing the purpose in hand, regardless of the possibility of future mischiefs in a different quarter, is, when carried out into practice, a seeming violation of the command given to the Israelites in their sieges, not to cut down trees which afford food for man, to construct their warlike engines; but to keep sacred from the ravages of war, what would be useful in the future days of peace.

We should continually examine ourselves whether we are arguing for the love of truth, or the love of triumph.

There is perhaps no one cause that contributes to harden men in error, and in misconduct of any kind, than the dread that a confession of having been wrong, will be met by humiliating exultation.

It should not be forgotten, that while unity among Christians is an object so desirable that everything but truth should be sacrificed to it, it must after all depend on *others*, as much as on ourselves; and our endeavours to promote it, may be completely defeated through their fault; truth is a benefit—and a benefit of the first importance—to those who receive it themselves, even though they should have to lament its rejection by many others.

To labour for peace with man, is the Christian's duty; to labour often vainly, is his appointed trial; peace with God is his promised consolation; and eternal peace will be his "exceeding great reward."

XVI. Party-Spirit.

The tendency of party-spirit has ever been to disguise, and propagate, and support error.

Party-*spirit* is the excess and perversion of a legitimate, limited social feeling, that may be designated party-*feeling;* and, deriving itself from the same springs as the love of kindred or of country, though neither so sacred as the first of these, nor so noble as the second, is yet as natural as either.

As kindled brands, if left to themselves separately, would be soon extinct, but, when thrown together, burst into a blaze, so is every feeling heightened immeasurably in ardour by the union of men in parties.

Party-spirit enlists man's virtues in the cause of his vices.

He who would desire to have an accurate description of party-spirit, need only go through Paul's description of Charity, reversing every point in the detail.

If it be hard to *keep* clear, it is still harder to *become*, clear of party.

The wish to think it justifiable to agree with, and adhere to, a party, is likely to bias a man's judgment, rather than to influence him contrary to his judgment.

The connexion of sound and erroneous views, resulting from their being both held by the same party, tends to establish and propagate error. In the usual adoption by each member of the doctrines, in the mass, whatever may chance to be *wrong* in this *set* of opinions and principles, is likely to pass unobserved, or to be disguised as to its real character, by its artificial connexion with so much that has been so long regarded as right.

Many a one is so far gone in party as to be *proof-proof*, and cares no more for facts than the Leviathan does for spears.

That preference of the means to the end, of the distinctions of a party to the truth, for the defence or prumulgation of which it was originally formed, which is one grand characteristic of party-spirit, is like the sedulously guarding and keeping in repair the fortifications of a city, while the city itself is suffered to fall into decay; or, like the clinging to a standard, while the cause in which it was uplifted is forgotten.

Some men have but little fear either of lukewarmness or religious ignorance, in comparison of heterodoxy or dissent, and, careless whether their brethren be Christians provided they be not sectaries, would, as it were, condemn them to perish by famine, lest they should use unwholesome food. They say with the disciples, "We forbade him to cast out demons because he joined not with us."

Every now and then, a case occurs which affords (Bacon's) *experimentum crucis*, whether the truth a man actually holds, and for which there is good evidence, is held by him *on* evidence, and *as* truth, or as part of the creed of a party.

Nineteen twentieths are so biassed by party views, that what is communicated by them is, in respect of knowledge, a kind of negative quantity. It is a one-sided view, much more misleading than total ignorance; and yet they give very often their own real impressions. Just as on an Irish jaunting-car, the parties, sitting back to back, give, at the end of a tour, a faithful report of what they have seen, quite at variance with each other, having hardly caught even a glimpse of the same objects.

It is only when error is seen to be opposed, not because maintained by such and such persons, but because it *is* error, that it is seen that it is the love of truth, and not party-spirit, that influences to that opposition. It was thus that the Lord braved the *disappointment* of the Pharisees at His censures of *them*, after "He had put the Sadducees to silence."

The adoption by several persons of the same views on sincere conviction, and not in deference to one another's authority, is so far from constituting them a party, that, on the contrary, party-spirit is most decidedly shown in respect of those points wherein men, not coinciding in their judgments, make mutual sacrifices of their respective opinions, just as the Roman triumvir, each sacrificed some of his own friends to the joint proscription.

Men may be very wrong on the right side. Parties are apt to generate parties, because men's abhorrence of the

extreme into which one party has been hurried leads them too often to form an opposite party, that before long, rushes into an extreme on the opposite side.

General and indefinite adherence to a religious party, is a setting up man in the place of God — "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," is the expression of precisely that sort of allegiance which is due to God and not to man. "Be not ye called master, for one is your Master, even Christ."

XVII. The Spirit of Persecution.

Truth is under a veil, and its proper aspect disguised, when supported by means which might equally support falsehood.

To employ force instead of sound reasons, in opposing religious error and infidelity, is to throw away the only weapons peculiar to truth, and the only ones that give truth an advantage, to take up those which can give it none.

The question, What religion is true? and the question as to the way in which the professors of a religion we deem to be false should be treated, are often confounded.

It should never be forgotten that He who declared He could have called in the aid of "more than twelve legions of angels," and to whom "all power was given in heaven and in earth," sent forth His disciples not to *subjugate* or to *coerce*, but to "*teach* all nations."

Our Lord did not merely claim spiritual dominion, but He also *renounced* temporal — He declared not merely that His kingdom is of the *next* world, but that it is *not* of *this* world. And this He did, when on his trial before a Roman governor for *treason*, — for a design to subvert, or in some way interfere with, the established government. To this charge, it is plain Pilate understood Him to plead not guilty, and gave credit to His plea, amounting as it did to a renunciation of all secular coercion, — all forcible measures in behalf of His religion.

As the very Apostles who inculcated, without any express limitation or exception, submission to civic rulers, and though Pagans, described them as powers "*ordained* of God" for the punishment of evil-doers, yet taught men, both by precept and example, to hold fast their faith in disobedience to the commands of the rulers; it is manifest they must have meant, and their hearers must have understood them to mean, that the province of the *civil ruler is limited to secular concerns.* For civil magistrates, therefore, to employ their coercive power in the cause of Christianity is not, as some think, to act, as civil magistrates, on Christian principles, but rather to *cease* to act on them.

Men too often employ that violence in the cause of what they *believe* to be Divine truth, which Jesus Himself and His Apostles expressly forbade in the cause of what *they knew* to be Divine truth.

There is not *necessarily* anything of the character of persecution in doing violence to a man's conscience, for so long as false conscience, or an erroneous conscience is to be

found, the plea of conscience would tend to the subversion of the whole fabric of society.

To refuse or withhold on religious grounds anything to which a man had no previously existing right, is not persecution; but merely the exercise of the right of the person withholding to do what he "will with his own." It might indicate a disposition to persecute, but does not involve the principle of persecution.

The distinction between a *civil* or political right on the one hand, and a *moral* right on the other, is of incalculable importance. By rights of conscience, is to be understood, not necessarily that every one is right in the religion that he adopts, but that his neighbours have no right to interfere with his right. A man has a right, not necessarily a moral right, but a civil right, to worship God according to his own conscience, without suffering any hardship at the hand of his neighbour for so doing.

There are no two things more often confounded, yet more perfectly distinct, than liberal tolerance and latitudinarian indifference.

A man may advocate the removal of *all* religious disabilities consistently, and on intelligible principles quite distinct from universal religious indifference; but to retain some by way of proclaiming that he is not indifferent, and yet to allow the removal of others, is plainly to proclaim indifference as to the latter.

Conscientious sincerity is friendly to tolerance as latitudinarian indifference is to intolerance. He who is ready to

profess what he does not believe, will see no reason why others should not do the same; while he whose own conscience is tender, will be the more disposed to respect the conscience of another, and to admit it to be the duty of all men to act upon their own convictions, in that way in which he thinks it a duty to act upon his.

To defend the precluding any, on account of religion, from civil rights, on the ground that any master of a family assumes the right of requiring all the members of his household to profess the religion he thinks best, is to take for granted that each country *belongs* to its governor in the same manner as the house of any individual belongs to him.

As no tree is withered by the frost of the polar regions, or by the scorching winds of the Arabian deserts, because none can exist in those regions; so there is no actual persecution in those countries where persecution has done its work, in crushing and preventing all resistance to religious error. Therefore, the absence of the *infliction* does not imply the absence of the *spirit* of persecution.

Persecution is not wrong because it is cruel; but it is cruel because it is wrong.

As men feel insult more than injury, so even a complete general despotism, weighing down all classes without exception, is, in general, far more readily borne, that invidious distinctions drawn between a favoured and a depressed class of subjects. It is notorious accordingly, how much Sparta was weakened and endangered by the Helots; and yet the Persian subjects of the great king had probably no larger share of civil rights, though they felt less galled by the re-

striction, because surrounded by those who equally with themselves were abject slaves of the one powerful despot.

To limit the term persecutor to one who persecutes the holders of a true religion, is, not only to render utterly vain all dissuasions from persecution, as every one will be sure to apply the term to his neighbour's belief and not to his own; but it is also to attach no blame to persecution, but only to religious error; for we cannot say that we blame a sovereign for killing or banishing one-half of his subjects, if our meaning be that we blame him only for not deciding rightly *which* half it should be.

As a narrow or a larger room is equally a prison if a man is forced to remain confined in it; so the narrowing or the enlarging the bounds of orthodoxy does not constitute the absence, or the presence, of persecution.

A man cannot be said to be at *liberty*, or to exercise his own judgment, if another—however rightly—decide for him, if he is not left to himself to take which side of an alternative he thinks fit. To say that religious liberty does not imply irreligious liberty, is to say of a person that he is at liberty to remain within the walls of the prison, but not at liberty to leave it.

What! should we tolerate those who would extend no toleration to us? Yes; unless we are prepared to change, "Whatsoever ye *would* that *men should* do unto you," into "whatsoever ye *think* that *men would* do unto you, even so do unto them."

The principle of persecution — besides being wholly at

variance with the spirit of Christianity—acts also, as a kind of specific poison to sincere belief. Like a pestilential atmosphere, it makes gradual and imperceptible advances in debilitating the system, and tainting the inmost springs of life, more or less speedily, according to the constitution of each individual; and carries off its victims, one by one, without external blow, by a secret internal decay. For in proportion as men are accustomed to regard it as right that outward profession should be enforced, they will come to regard the inward belief, which cannot be enforced, as insignificant. Conformity will be regarded as the great object, and truth as a matter we need not be concerned about.

To defend Christianity by penal laws, is most seriously to injure its cause, by weakening the force, and lessening the value, of two important branches of evidence. It is to impair, not only the confirmation afforded by concurrence of testimony of *voluntary* professors, but the still more important evidence, the *defiance* of contradiction; for it is but rational to believe what is not disproved, while we know that there are those abroad who are doing their utmost to disprove it, and that if there were any flaw in the evidence, it would be detected and proclaimed.

To attach secular advantages and disabilities to the profession or rejection of truth, is to superadd to the difficulties already in the way of an unbiassed judgment, the gratuitous, and still greater, hindrance of the dread of the imputation of unworthy and interested motives.

The kind of sovereignty which a political community possesses, and in which the exercise of coercive power is implied, as its proper and main object, is the very circumstance which

places beyond its proper province the very highest and noblest object of all. Pure morality, as existing in the motives, and sincere belief in a *true religion*, are precisely what cannot be produced, directly and immediately, by coercive power. "The quality of mercy is not strained;" and thus is it also with Christian, faith, hope, and charity, and every moral virtue. Christianity is a religion of motives; and Legislative Enactments do not control motives.

Hypocrisy has been styled "the homage which vice renders to virtue;" but if virtue herself could be consulted, she would probably think the courteous custom "better honoured in the breach than the observance." No man who loves truth himself, can value another's professing truth, which is not truth to him.

An insincere pretender to moral virtue is a better member of society, though not a better man, than a barefaced profligate; but religious hypocrisy is an unmixed evil, and has no countervailing advantage; since an insincere profession of faith benefits no one, and only tends to cast a suspicion, when detected, on the sincerity of others.

Every man's religious persuasion must be defended — and can only be defended — by himself. To those who are not themselves earnest and vigilant, as no Divine aid is promised, so no *human* aid can be availing.

In *all* questions where there is a right or a wrong, several different parties cannot be all right. When all are forced into agreement on outward submission, what they submit to MAY conceivably be right.

But suppose it not? Then *all* are in the wrong; and truth and right have no chance at all to the end of time.

It is not given to the generality of men to perceive the ultimate inexpediency of coercion in each particular case; and therefore Christianity, often as its name has been blazoned on the banners of the persecutor—Christianity, truly understood, and honestly applied, is the only permanently effectual preventive of the spirit of persecution.

As the principle of persecution has its source, not in this or that doctrinal system, but in human nature, so nothing can give security against it but the implantation of Christian principle, — that only principle which is able to purify, to renovate, to convert that nature; in short, to create "the new man."

XVIII. Regard to Seeming Expediency.

1. *Pious Frauds.* 2. *Reserve and double Doctrine.* 3. *Modern Theory of Development.*

1. *Pious Frauds.*

The greatest obstacle to the following of truth, is the tendency to look, in the first instance, to the *expedient.*

The votary of a religion built on faith in the truth ought to adhere scrupulously to truth, in the means he employs in the furtherance of it, as well as the end he proposes, and to follow fearlessly *wherever* truth may lead.

He may be a sincere believer in the usefulness of what he advocates, who yet may not be a believer in its truth.

'Honesty is the best policy;" but he who acts on that principle is not an honest man.

To make expediency the road to truth, is the sin which most easily besets the instructor of others; and the more easily, because he that does not begin by teaching what he thoroughly believes, will speedily end by believing what he teaches.

The fullest conviction of the truth of the cause in which we may be engaged, is no security against our sliding into falsehood; unless we are sedulous in forming and cherishing a habit of loving, and renouncing, and strictly adhering to, truth.

That union of conscientiousness in respect of the end, and unscrupulous dishonesty as to the means, which constitutes what is called "a pious fraud," is not peculiar to the members of any church; is not peculiar to an erroneous belief as to what *is* a good end; is not peculiar to any sect, age, or country — to any subject-matter, religious or secular, but is the spontaneous growth of the corrupt soil of man's heart.

It is important to remember that pious frauds fall naturally into two classes of positive and negative: the one, the introduction and propagation of what is false; the other, the mere toleration of it. A plant may be in a garden from two causes, either from being planted designedly, or being found there and left there. In either case some degree of approbation is implied. He who propagates a delusion,

and he who connives at it, when already existing, both alike tamper with truth.

We must neither *lead*, nor *leave*, men to mistake falsehood for truth.

The giving, or not correcting, false reasons for right conclusions—false grounds for right belief—false principles for right practice; the holding forth, or fostering, false consolations, false encouragements, and false sanctions, or conniving at their being held forth or believed, are all pious frauds.

When men cannot, or will not, admit sound arguments for a true conclusion, to give them unsound ones, is like the countervailing fraud of meeting an unjust demand of a debt, never incurred, by forging a receipt.

Some men, provided others come to a right conclusion, care not how they come at it.

Nothing is more common among the indolent and thoughtless, than to resort to falsehood as a compendious way of managing and controlling children, of evading disagreeable questions, and satisfying their doubting minds; thus serving a present turn at the expense, not only of veracity, but of tenfold ultimate inconvenience to those who employ the artifice, and of moral injury to the deceived. As reasonably might one expect habits of neatness from one who has been reared in a pig-sty with swine, as a frank, open, unsuspicious love of truth from him, who has been made first the dupe, and, afterwards, the imitator of falsehood.

The pious fraud which leads, or leaves men to look for temporal rewards and punishments as the sanctions of a re-

ligion the Author and Finisher of which was crucified, and His disciples persecuted, must have as its natural consequence the producing a general distrust of Providence, when it is found that pestilences, shipwrecks, conflagrations, &c., make no distinction between the pious and the impious.

To say anything, however true of itself, of which we have not a hearty conviction at the moment, breeds a habit of insincerity.

He who accustoms himself to dispense with complete sincerity, for the sake of supposed utility, and to support true conclusions by any premises that offer, will soon lose the power of distinguishing what conclusions *are* true.

Those who accommodate Christianity to corrupt human nature, instead of gaining those whom they strive to conciliate, are in danger of losing their own faith. They are like the man who boasted of having "caught a Tartar," when the fact was that the Tartar had *caught him.*

To advance false premises, no matter how true the conclusion may be to which they lead, or knowingly adduce unsound arguments, however important may be the conviction to be produced by them, is an affront put on the Spirit of truth; a hiring of the Syrians to fight the battles of the Lord God of Israel.

No mixture of evil is ever necessary for any really good purpose; and those who act as if it were, are really doing evil that good may come.

That is a dangerous cant, now-a-days heard so often — "There is *some* truth in so and so; and therefore it is the

mission of him who holds it, *though mixed* with much error, to propagate the belief of his doctrines." *Some* truth! yes; the serpent had some truth in what he said; the forbidden tree *was* a tree of knowledge. And there was some truth in Eve's reflections. It *was* "pleasant to the eye" and desirable "to make one wise." Here was the love of the beautiful and of knowledge in the very first sin which was committed.

The much that is good and true in any system, only enables the much that is evil and false to gain the greater currency.

Many have begun in wilful deceit to end in superstitious belief. They first themselves shape "the image of the beast," and then apply to the false prophet to make it "speak and live." The very curse sent on those who do not love the truth is that of "strong delusion that they should believe a lie."

XVIII. Regard to Seeming Expediency.

2. *Reserve and double Doctrine.*

As the true sense of each word is that which is understood by it, (otherwise language would completely fail of the very object for which language exists, — viz., to convey an intelligible meaning,) it cannot make any difference in point of veracity, whether a man says that which is untrue in every sense, or that which, though in a certain sense true, yet is false in the sense in which he knows it will be understood.

How incalculable is the injury to the cause of truth, from that system of reserve and double doctrine, which adopts and

avows the principle that a man "may say one thing while he aims at accomplishing a different thing;" that he "may make belief it is "bread" he is showing, when, as the saying is, it is really a "stone;" that "he may say what looks like truth, rather than what is true;" that "he may take all words in different senses, and take any sense for the purpose of victory." The exhibition of such Jesuitical morality, which makes pious fraud consistent with Christian virtue, is likely to endanger the faith both of those who are, and of those who are not, themselves of an open and honest disposition. Those who have a disdain of every kind of disingenuousness and double dealing, will turn in indignant disgust from the Gospel, against which their moral sentiments will have thus been excited; and this in proportion as these sentiments are just, and elevated, and pure. And though their procedure is indeed justly censurable, in not examining for themselves what the religion is before they reject it; yet this does not lessen the responsibility of those who place such a stumbling-block in another's path. "Woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh." And those again of a lower tone of morality, who confine the term "vice" to intemperate sensuality and the like (which though the Tempter is ready to seduce men into, are yet not so truly parts of his own character, not so completely satanic as falsehood and fraud) will be encouraged to make profession of what they do not believe, and of what they suspect their teachers to believe as little.

The dishonesty of a double meaning, a design hidden, while apparently disavowed, in order to serve a present purpose, is akin to the stratagem of the ancient architect employed by one of the Ptolemies to build a magnificent light-house; and who, being ordered to put thereon an inscription in honour of the king, and coveting such a record for him-

self, made the inscription on a plaister resembling stone, but of perishable substance; so that the next generation saw *another* inscription recording the name, not of the king, but of the architect which had been secretly engraved on the durable stone below.

To perceive and censure the disingenuousness of the system of Reserve, and yet continue to speak of its advocates with admiration and gratitude, for their alleged services to the Church in respect of certain rites and forms, is to become a wilful abettor of known falsehood; and to make the "tithes of mint, and rue, and cummin," a kind of set-off against the neglect of "the weightier matters of the law"—against moral as well as doctrinal taint.

The advocates of Reserve among us, who speak of an ordinary reader being likely to "miss their real meaning by not being aware of the peculiar sense in which they employ terms," are not without their counterparts. The German Transcendentalists, whose system of Theology, or rather of Atheology, is little else than a new edition of the Pantheism of the ancient Heathen Philosophers, of the Brahmins, and the Buddhists, use a similar double-meaning language. They profess to believe that Christianity came from God, in the same sense in which *everything* comes from God; they teach the incarnation, explaining to the initiated that this means the presence of the Deity, *i. e.*, of the "spiritual principle" which pervades the universe, — the God of Pantheism in *man generally*, as well as in *all other* animals; and they profess a belief in man's immortality—that is, that the *human species* will never become extinct, &c. Let any one compare together these two systems, (if indeed they are to be reckoned as two,) and say, whether there is *any greater*

violence done to the ordinary sense of words by the one than by the other; and what limit is there to such insincerity? Even supposing, therefore, that all the disciples of the school in question do inwardly believe in the truth of Christianity, they cannot give any sufficient assurance that they do so. A suppression of Gospel truth is virtually a falsification of it.

There is a gradual instruction by which a judicious teacher imparts knowledge with due regard to the age, understanding, previous acquirements, opportunities, and other circumstances of the learners, in proportion as they are able to bear it; knowing that, practically speaking, all truth is relative, and that a statement of any doctrine true to one man, may, in effect, be false to another if it be such as cannot but lead him to form false notions. This gradual instruction is not to be confounded with the system of withholding any portion of God's truth from those able and willing to receive it — the system of shunning to "declare the whole counsel of God;" the "double doctrine," the suppression or "Reserve" of the fundamental truths of Christianity, as a secret to be imparted only to a select few, and to be kept back from the great mass of the people.

He who does not teach all men as well as he can, acts as if he were the steward not "of the mysteries of God" but of *his own.*

It is important to observe that wherever Paul characterizes the Christian religion, or any part of it by the word "Mystery," he is directing attention not to the *concealment* but the *disclosure* of the mystery, and conveying the idea that it is something which "now is made manifest," and

which we are therefore called upon to contemplate and study, even at his office was "to *make known* the mystery of the Gospel." Not that he meant to imply that we are able fully to understand the Divine dispensations; but it is not *in reference* to this, their inscrutable character, that he calls them mysteries, not *so far forth as* they are hidden and unintelligible; but so far as they are *revealed* and *explained.*

God has not authorized *man* to suppress any part of what He has revealed; and it is impious presumption even to enquire into the expediency of such a procedure.

The advocates of Reserve in teaching appeal to our Lord's example, who, they say, taught openly in parables, and expounded those parables only to His own disciples. But this can be no justification of it, when it is remembered that our Lord concealed the meaning of His parables only from those who, with the evidence of His miracles before them, refused to acknowledge Him as a "teacher sent from God;" while it is from Christian men—from those who have enrolled themselves already as His disciples—that the full explanation of some of the essential doctrines of His religion is withheld by this system. But even such concealment as He practised was not to continue longer than the period of His own personal ministry, for He expressly commands, "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops."

It must not be forgotten that though the Divine Author and Finisher of our faith said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now;" yet He did, by His Spirit, gradually impart this knowledge, not to some subsequent generation, but to those very individuals. And

in that which Paul says, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it: neither yet now are ye able;" he evidently implies a hope that they —those very individuals—*will* be able to bear it. The very similitude of *babes*, indeed, of itself draws our attention, our hopes, and our endeavours towards a progressive growth into manhood.

The Great Teacher knew indeed what portion of His truth is exactly suited for each generation of mankind; and when, and how far, imperfect knowledge may be given, without necessarily leading those who receive it into error. But with us it is otherwise. We are in the condition of ignorant men to whom some sage physician has imparted, for the benefit of others, a medicine curiously compounded according to rules of art with which we are unacquainted. Is it not madness, then, to say, that because the physician himself has formerly in his own practice, when dealing with other patients, sometimes omitted some of the ingredients of that medicine, therefore, *we* are justified in leaving out some part of the compound when we please, and yet still calling it his remedy? The medicine, surely, may be as much changed by omitting some ingredients as by adding others.

To postpone, *sine die*, the communication of religious knowledge, on the plea that men, through ignorance, weakness, or prejudice, are not yet ripe for it, is to expect them to become ripe, like the fruits of the earth, by mere *waiting*.

The teacher who, while holding himself bound not to *add on* to Scripture anything he does *not* believe to be true, hesitates not to suppress any portion of Gospel truth at his pleasure, misplaces his scruple as absurdly as the man who

would not worship a moulded image, though he would a sculptured one, as not contemplated in the commandment against *making* an image, because it is not "made;" the artist having *added* nothing, but merely taken away.

For all the consequences of what God has been pleased to do, man is not responsible; but man *is* responsible for all the consequences of what he presumes to do in altering His arrangements.

He who holds the double doctrine, the esoteric and exoteric, professing the principle that it is allowable and right to have one Gospel for the mass of the people, and another for the initiated few, and is believed in that profession, need not wonder to find that he is thenceforward believed in *nothing else*. Let it be once understood that a man wears a mask, all persons will form their own conjectures as to what is under it.

Those who imagine that the scholastic divinity, in which are things quite beyond the mass of the people, and which it would be utterly idle even to attempt to teach them, is an essential part of the Gospel, will not easily avoid being forced to allow the necessity of a double doctrine. Bnt this is rather another reason for condemning all presumptuous speculations and metaphysical theories of Christianity—all of them equally; for there is nothing more characteristic of the Gospel dispensation than its oneness — one Lord, one faith, one hope, — in short, one and the same Gospel, proposed to the poor, and to the learned, to all who will heartily receive it — "I thank Thee, O Father," said our Lord, "that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast *revealed them unto babes.*" And again, He says to the humble fisher-

men who followed Him, "Many prophets and kings have desired to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' And what they did hear and learn from Him in private, those things He charged them to publish from "the house-tops."

It is a point of the highest importance, towards our belief in the Christian religion, that we should regard it as suited to all mankind, because otherwise it cannot be a true revelation. The systems of Aristotle or Plato, of Newton or Locke, may, conceivably, be very true, although the mass of mankind cannot comprehend them, because they were never intended for the mass of mankind: but Jesus Himself did certainly intend His religion for high and low, rich and poor; for His command was to "go preach the Gospel to every creature," and He applied to His mission the prophecy, "To the poor the gospel is preached;" and therefore, if it be not one which the lower ranks of society are *capable* of embracing, He, the founder of it, must have been mistaken in his calculation—must have been ignorant, either of the character of His own religion, or of the nature of man; which would of course imply that he could not have been Divinely inspired.

That system of "Reserve," which teaches that the doctrine of the Atonement, the divinity of Christ, and other fundamental parts of the Gospel, should be kept back from the mass of the people, has no sanction whatever from the Scriptures. For whatever Paul *does* mean by "the wisdom" which he spoke among the perfect," or "the strong meat" which he did not give to babes, he certainly does *not* mean these essential doctrines; since he fully propounds these doctrines in the very epistles from which these passages are cited. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, for example, he expressly

tells us that, among those who were "yet carnal," and whom he had fed with milk, he had "determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ, and *Him crucified*," and that he had "delivered unto them *first of all* that Christ *died for our sins;* and, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he insists largely upon the divinity of Christ to those whom he, at the same time, declares to be such as "have need of milk, and not of strong meat. Indeed, so plainly are these doctrines set forth in the Scriptures, that it is only by abstaining from the reading of them that it is *possible* to keep them out of sight. And therefore the system of "Reserve" has a great tendency to discourage the study of the Bible. Men may succeed in persuading others to keep back something of the counsel of God; but as long as the Apostles and Evangelists are permitted to bear their testimony, we shall still find them preaching without reserve Christ crucified, and such preaching will still be "a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish;" and we shall have to meet them "witnessing to small and great," and plainly setting the whole truth before all men, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." May every Christian teacher, who loves the truth, go and do likewise.

The preaching of the truth will not produce its appropriate effects, unless the *whole* truth is preached, as well as nothing but the truth.

XVIII. Regard to Seeming Expediency.

3. *Modern Theory of Development.*

In its etymological sense, truth signifies that which the speaker "trows" or believes to be the fact; and therefore it has been contended that it is idle to speak of eternal or immutable truth. Upon this ground, it would be just as absurd to speak of sending a letter by the "post," because a post in its primary sense is a pillar; or to admit that "sycophant" can ever mean anything but "fig-shower."

The character of the Gospel is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Temporary or local circumstances are the cause, not of any article being, or not being, a part of the Christian faith; but of its being a part which it is needful, or not needful, to set forth prominently.

A modern use of the word "inspiration" is very large, indeed, in its application; so large that a person who did not scruple using it in the sense thus given to it, might turn *Robinson Crusoe*, or the *Arabian Nights*, into allegories about religion, and then speak of them as "divinely inspired;" meaning that they *might be made* to afford religious instruction, and were *providentially* so written as to be capable of that particular application, though it was never intended by the writers. Now people will be apt to suspect that those who speak of "the whole Bible" as "one great parable," to be expounded mystically and allegorically, even in the plainest narratives and arguments, and as having as

many meanings as a "pious" fancy can find for its words; —do in reality entertain, at bottom, much the same opinion of Scripture as of *Robinson Crusoe*, or the *Arabian Nights*. For any book at all may be made to yield a profitable meaning, if we ourselves first put that meaning into it, and choose to consider it as "a great parable" of something that we have not learned from it, but have known already by some other means.

There are many now who, while professing belief in the Divinity of Christianity, yet mix up with it other ideas which virtually nullify that belief. "Christ," they will say, "was an inspired prophet, and so was Mahomet, and Dante, and Luther, and Milton, and a multitude of others. They had all the Divine spark within them—all had great missions to accomplish," &c. And thus the ideas of genius and of Divine inspiration are confused together; and by raising others to the level of the Founder of our faith, they virtually degrade Him. They thus imitate the trick of Morgiana in the *Forty Thieves*, who, when she perceived *one* door marked with red chalk, immediately marked all those on each side, so that the mark ceased to be a distinction.

Erratum in some Modern Theories: — for *development* of gospel-scheme, read *depravation* — *human* additions to a *divine* revelation.

To Christianity, as a revelation *complete* in our Sacred Books, both the Neologist and the Tractite, more or less openly, confess their objection.

The Christian religion is an *historical* religion, not merely connected with, but *founded* on, certain recorded events —

the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Saviour, the pouring out of His spirit, &c. Strictly speaking, the Gospel is the annunciation of what God has done for man. The Lord Jesus accomplished what He left His apostles to testify of, and to explain; He offered up Himself on the cross that they might teach the atoning virtue of His sacrifice; He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, that they might declare the great mystery of His divine and human nature, and preach that faith in Him by which His followers hope to be raised and to reign with Him.

The Mosaic Dispensation was the dawn of "the day-spring from on high," not yet arrived—of a sun only about to rise: it was a revelation in itself imperfect. The sun of the Gospel arose, — "the True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," appeared; but it was partially hidden, and is so still, by a veil of clouds,—by prejudices of various kinds, — by the passions, and infirmities, and ignorance of mankind. We may advance, and we may lead others to advance, indefinitely, in full development of Gospel truth, — of the real character and meaning and design of Christ's religion; not by seeking to superadd something to the Gospel-revelation, but by a more correct and fuller comprehension of it; not by increasing absolutely the light of the noon-day sun, but by clearing away the mists which obscure our view. Christianity itself cannot be improved; but men's views and estimate, and comprehension of Christianity, may be indefinitely improved.

Increased understanding of the written Word, a more and more full development of what the Evangelists and Apostles have conveyed to us, are to be attained without adding to the Gospel. But we cannot be too much on our guard against

the delusions of those who go so far as to represent the Revelation of the Christian scheme, contained in the New Testament, as a mere imperfect and uncompleted outline; and who, while exulting in their imagined progress in Christian knowledge through a fancied development, are, in reality, straying into other paths, and following a bewildering meteor.

To take (as proposed by Coleridge) a man's feeling of the suitableness of Christianity to his wants, not as a confirmation of other evidences of the religion, but as a complete substitute for them, is to forget that, doubtless, many of the Mahometans perceived this suitableness in their own religion, and many of the Hindoos in theirs. The grossest superstitions have often proved satisfying and soothing to the ignorant devotee. No corrupt religion could ever have arisen at all, or have been received, if those who introduced it, and their followers, had not found a "want" of some such system.

Those modern theorists who rest all on subjective feelings and inward emotions, to the exclusion of objective evidence—who make the truth of Christianity dependent upon the subjective suitability, and not on the objective credibility, of the Revelation, should be reminded that this is not only a setting up of each man for himself to be the standard of divine truth, but that, as respects the taste and the wants upon the suitability to which the evidence of the Gospel is made to depend, the wants are such as are made known to us by the Gospel only; and the taste such as the Gospel does not usually find, but implant in the human mind.

The subjective evidences of Christianity are indeed a confirmation, but a confirmation rather the reward of faith,

accompanied by obedience, than the foundation on which to build it. "If any man *will* do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

That kind of evidence which *all* Christians ought to have, that the Gospel does meet the nature and the real wants of man, is obtained not by rejecting evidence, and resolving to conform their religious belief to their own tastes and inclinations; but, on the contrary, by striving to conform their own tastes and inclinations to their religious belief.

Suppose some one should offer to several persons, suffering under a painful and dangerous disease, some medicine which he declared would relieve their sufferings, and restore them to health; it would be natural and reasonable for them to ask for some testimony or other proof, to assure them of this, before they made trial of the medicine: then, suppose them to be so far convinced, — some by one proof, and some by another, — as to make trial of the medicine; and that they found themselves daily getting better as they took it: they would then have—all of them—an evidence from experience, confirming the former proofs that had originally brought them to make the trial. Just so, different persons may have been led by different kinds of proof to embrace the Gospel; but when they have embraced it, they may all hope for this confirmation of their faith, by the further proof from experience.

But — to use the same comparison — as those persons who had taken the medicine, if they were wise, would be convinced of its virtues, not from its being immediately pleasant to the taste, or from its suddenly exciting and cheering them up, like a strong cordial; but from its gradually restoring their strength, and removing the symptoms of the disease,

and advancing them daily towards perfect health; so also Christian experience does not consist in violent transports, or any kind of sudden or overpowering impressions on the feelings, though such may be experienced; but in a steady, habitual, and continual improvement of the heart and the conduct. And this is the Christian experience alluded to in the New Testament Scriptures; which thus afford an additional internal evidence of these having been written by sober-minded men. For the test they refer to is "a growth in grace and knowledge,"—a "bringing forth fruit with patience." For "patience," says St. Paul, "worketh experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

To say that Conscience, and not Reason, is the judge of truth in religious matters, is to forget that since men really *cannot* believe or disbelieve without something that comes before the mind as *proof*, the first dictate of a sound conscience would be to examine that evidence carefully, lest we should be deceived; so that following Conscience in this sense would come to the same thing as following Reason. But what some modern teachers mean by Conscience is certain "feelings of awe, and reverence, and admiration," which they are pleased to call by that name; and the course which they mean to recommend is taking for evidence of the *truth* of a religious system its apparent fitness for gratifying such feelings, flinging yourself into it with unhesitating trust; and, if found to fail in satisfying your religious sentiments, then, and not till then, another is to be tried. But what is the meaning of all this? You are to pass on, it seems, from one to another and a higher system; but still the moral and religious feelings may be, and probably are, but

imperfectly developed. The infant judge of truth may have cast off its swaddling-bands, and yet be only in short coats. In a third stage, it may gain more manly attire; and yet, even after that, a thousand more seemly forms of clothing may await its growing limbs. Who knows but in the end it may outgrow them all? Naked it came forth from its mother's womb, and naked it may return. May not, if these notions be correct, Pantheism or Atheism be the final issue (as we know it actually has been in many instances) of such a development of man's moral and religious feelings?

We cannot hope for the Apostle's consolatory trust of being "free from the blood of all men," unless, like him, we declare "the whole counsel of God," and nothing as a part of the Christian faith, *but* the counsel of God.

The True alone the Expedient.

So long as we acknowledge truth to be in itself stronger than falsehood, it can never be true expediency to resort to any means that, by tending to put them on a level, must be on the whole less favourable to the cause of truth than of error.

The erroneousness of the views which fraud or force is used to oppose, or the soundness of those that either is used to support, does not lessen the danger or the evil of employing it. "Will ye," says Job, "speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for Him?"

Nothing but the right can ever be the expedient, since that can never be true expediency which would sacrifice a greater good to a less, — "For what shall it *profit* a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

The good effects resulting, at least, *apparently* resulting, from every false system, have a continual and rapid tendency towards decay; while the evil fruits are borne in continually increasing profusion, and with more and more of poisonous luxuriance.

All frauds, like the "wall daubed with untempered mortar," with which men think to buttress up an edifice, always tend to the decay of the system they are devised to support.

It is only to the pure in heart who love truth for its own sake, that it is given to see its expediency.

The maxim that "Honesty is the best policy" can never be to any one the habitual and constant guide of conduct. He who is honest is always *before* it; and he who is not, will often be far behind it.

The *expediency* of truth can be estimated by few, but its intrinsic loveliness by all who, in undoubting faith and firm reliance on their great Master, reject disguise, and sophistry, and equivocation, at once, as hateful to Him; and who, as becomes Christian faith, walk boldly forward in the path of duty, though the point to which it leads may not be perceptible at every turn; looking for all needful aid to that sanctifying, and enlightening, and supporting grace, which alone can raise to life "the dead in sin," and purify man's corrupt

nature, and effectually open his eyes to the truth, and cause him to receive "the truth in the love of it;" and strengthen the feeble knees to walk in the way of truth.

Courage, liberality, activity, and other good qualities are often highly prized by those who do not possess them in any great degree; but the zealous thorough-going love of truth is not very much admired, or liked, or indeed understood, except by those who possess it. There is nothing "covered," however, that shall not be "revealed," nor "hid," that shall not be "known;" and He to whom all hearts are open shall one day, by the brightness of His presence, clear away all obscurity, and dispel all falsehood and delusion; and the genuine and fearless lover of truth, who has sought not "the praise of men," but the praise of God who seeth in secret, shall be sanctified through His truth here, and by Him be rewarded openly hereafter.

ON THE MORAL FACULTY.

THE able and celebrated Dr. Paley, with other writers not few or obscure, maintains that man has no moral faculty whatever, feels naturally no disapprobation of ingratitude or approbation of gratitude, nor perceives any distinction between virtue and vice. All our notions, according to Paley, of what is called moral obligation, are derived from conformity to the will of a superior Being, with a view solely to our own eventual interest. And the distinction, accordingly, between what are commonly called moral precepts — things commanded because right — and positive precepts — things right because commanded—he completely does away. Now this notion that the commands of God, as delivered in Scripture, are the sole foundation of morality—the reference to the Divine will, the only standard of right and wrong — tends inevitably to derogate from God's honour, and to deprive the Christian revelation of its just evidence. Since to praise the pure morality of the Gospel, if the Gospel itself be the source from which we derive all our ideas of morality, is merely attributing to the Gospel the praise of being conformable to the rules derived from itself; and to call the will of God right and good, if our original ideas of righteousness and goodness imply a conformity to the divine will; is, in fact, no more than saying, that the will of God is the will of God. And this renders one, in particular, of our Lord's declarations, and a most important one, unintelligible and utterly absurd. "The servant who knew not His Lord's

will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." For, while most persons would readily understand the rule, that he who *knew* His Lord's will, and did it not, should receive heavier punishment; the rule that one who "knew *not* his Lord's will," *i. e.*, who had not received any express command, could commit things worthy of stripes, is utterly inconceivable on the supposition of men's notions of right and wrong being derived originally and entirely from a knowledge of the will of God. They are indeed derived from His will in the true sense that it was His will to create man a being endowed with a moral faculty.

God has *not* revealed to us in the Scriptures a system of morality such as would have been needed for beings who had no other means of distinguishing right and wrong. On the contrary, the inculcation of virtue and reprobation of vice in Scripture, are in such a tone as seems to pre-suppose a natural power, or a capacity for acquiring the power, to distinguish them. And if a man, denying or renouncing all claims of natural conscience, should practise without scruple everything he did not find expressly forbidden in Scripture, and think himself not bound to do anything that is not there expressly enjoined, exclaiming at every turn,

"Is it so written in the Bond?"

he would be leading a life very unlike what a Christian should be.

There is no moral formula more frequently cited, and with more deserved admiration, than that maxim, of doing to others as we would have them do to us; and, as Paley observes, no one probably ever was in practice led astray by

it. Yet if we imagine this maxim placed before a being destitute of all moral faculty, and attempting to learn, from this, what morality is, he would evidently interpret it as implying, that we are to do whatever we should *wish* for, if in another's place; which would lead to innumerable absurdities, and in many cases to absolute impossibilities; since, in many cases, our conduct will affect two or more parties, whose wishes are at variance with each other. A judge, for instance, before whom there might be a cause to be tried, would feel that both parties wished, each, for a decision in his own favour; which would be manifestly impossible. But, in practice, every one feels that what he is bound to do, is not necessarily what would be agreeable to his *inclinations*, were he in the other's place, but what he would think he might *justly* and *reasonably* expect. Now this very circumstance implies his having already a notion of what is just and reasonable. The use he is to make of the formula, is, not for the acquiring of these general principles, but for the *application* of them, in those cases where self-interest would be the most likely to blind him. And so as regards moral conduct generally, our Lord and His apostles do, indeed, warn men against the particular faults to which they are especially liable, and urge on them the practice of whatever duties they were the most likely to neglect: they bring forward strong motives for holiness of life such as no human systems or precepts could afford, and they hold out promises of such heaven-sent support and aid as human weakness needs; but they always evidently proceed on the supposition that men do use (and always have used) such words as "virtue" and "vice," and have always attached some meaning to those words, and understand that the one is preferable to the other.

Dr. Paley makes all our ideas of the difference between virtue and vice consist in this, that the one will be rewarded and the other punished by the Almighty in the next world, and the only influencing consideration to an act of prudence or virtue to be our gain or loss. And he goes on to say, that those who have no knowledge or belief of a future state, must frame the best theory of virtue they can for themselves, unless they can show that virtue produces the greatest amount of happiness in this world. This is to say that sin does not lead to suffering because it is sin, but that it is sin because it leads to suffering; and it follows that the ignorance or disbelief of a future state not only absolves from all moral obligation, but destroys even the very idea of moral obligation, resolving it all into submission from views of self-interest, to arbitrary, physical force. And this theory does away with what, in a great degree, distinguishes man from the brute creation. For on this supposition, the brutes, as capable of being incited by reward and deterred by punishment, would be as much moral agents as man. And yet no one thinks of applying the terms "sin" or "crime" to a brute, any more than we apply the term "folly" to the acts of animals destitute of reason. But in truth, as Bishop Butler has justly remarked, "What renders any one justly liable to punishment, is not the expectation of it, but the violation of a known duty."

So far is the Moral Faculty from being anything hostile to religion, or a pretended substitute for it, that, on the contrary, it is by this only that it is possible to perceive that God is not merely a ruler, who is able to enforce obedience, but who is justly entitled to obedience, and a proper object of our gratitude and love. Had man no natural principle of preference for benevolence rather than malice, and had he

been left to derive from a bare contemplation of the created universe his notions of the moral attributes of the Deity, he could not come to the conclusion that God is infinitely benevolent. The admixture of evil in His works, which we cannot account for, would stand in the way of such a conclusion. If man really were a being destitute of all moral sentiment—all innate and original admiration for goodness, he would in that case be more likely to come to the conclusion (as many of the heathens seem actually to have done) that the Deity was a being of a mixed or of a capricious nature; an idea which, shocking as it is to every well-constituted mind, would not be so in the least to such a mind as this supposition, of the destitution of this moral sentiment, attributes to the whole human race. To illustrate this argument a little further, let us suppose a tasteful architect, and a rude savage, to be both contemplating a magnificent building, unfinished, or partially fallen to ruin; the one, not being at all able to comprehend the complete design, nor having any taste for its beauties if perfectly exhibited, would not attribute any such design to the author of it, but would suppose the prostrate columns and rough stones to be as much designed as those that were erect and perfect: the other would sketch out, in his own mind, something like the perfect structure of which he beheld only a part; and though he might not be able to explain how it came to be unfinished or decayed, would conclude that some such design was in the mind of the builder; though this same man, if he were contemplating a mere rude heap of stones which bore *no* marks of design at all, would not in *that* case draw such a conclusion. — So also a friend whose worth and discretion we fully rely on, will sometimes adopt a measure which, on that very ground, we presume the right one, before we have sufficient knowledge of particulars to judge of the case itself. But we should be surprised to have it inferred

from this, that our estimate of his character universally, was nothing but a blind partiality, and that we had no notion of what are good or bad measures, except as they are, or are not, his. Nor is there any blameable presumption in the creature forming those judgments respecting the moral nature of the Creator which He has expressly directed us to form. "Are not," says He, "my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? And why even of yourselves judge ye not that which is right?"

If there be, independent of revelation, and irrespective of the arbitrary will of a Superior Being, no faculty of forming any notion of virtue and vice, how did the heathen moralists arrive at such as are set forth in Aristotle's *Treatise of Ethics?* The simple fact alone of the existence of this work, omitting as it does all mention of future retribution, and all reference to the will of the Deity, is sufficient to refute completely the assertion, that unassisted reason cannot furnish us with any knowledge of duty, and of the distinction between right and wrong.

If the Author of the Universe, and the Author of Christianity, the Giver of reason and revelation, be, as we contend, the same Being, it is to be expected that the declarations of His will, which we meet with in revelation, should correspond with the dictates of the highest and most perfect reason; and the testimony of the heathen moralists affords proof that such is the fact: and thus, this conformity of the morality of the ancient heathens, in all the most fundamental points, to the morality of the Gospel, furnishes an independent and unexceptionable testimony in favour of the Gospel. And this testimony, drawn from their general coincidence, is still more established by their differences in so many points. For

all the peculiarities of the Gospel-morality appear manifestly, on an attentive inspection, to consist not in departures from, not in contradiction to, natural morality; but in the connection, completion, and exaltation, of what had been laid down by human moralists. As far as any moralist has fallen short of the Gospel precepts, or been at variance with them, so far has he been inconsistent with his own principles, rightly considered and duly followed up. The forgiveness of injuries might be proved to a candid heathen to be more magnanimous upon his own principles, than revenge.

Strong as is the evidence for the truth of Christianity, from its general agreement with the *moral* systems which men have devised, it is still more confirmed by its disagreement with all their *religious* systems. Having the power to so great a degree of ascertaining the nature of virtue, and its conduciveness to happiness in this life, they would, one might have supposed, have been naturally led to conclude, that, if the same God be the Author and the Governor of this world and the next, such a course of behaviour as, generally speaking, leads to the greatest and most exalted enjoyment, should coincide, in most respects, with that which the Deity prescribes as tending to the happiness of the other world. Now, as no system of religion devised by man, exhibits this conformity, but, on the contrary, prescribes means of attaining the favour of the Deity totally unconnected with, if not wholly adverse to, man's welfare in this world; and as in the Christian religion that course of life which is most fitted to promote man's welfare in this world, is presented as necessary to secure the Divine favour, and the promised happiness of the next world; this alone is a presumption that the Author of this world is, indeed, the Author of our religion—a presumption strengthened by find-

ing, that the defect in their religious systems did not arise from their incapacity to perceive the character of virtue, or of its tendency to increase human happiness in this life.

The strong and independent testimony borne to the doctrine that human nature is corrupt, by a comparison of the heathen moralists with the heathen historians, turns that which some Christians, as well as infidels, seem to regard as one of the burdens which Christianity has to support, into one of the bulwarks of evidence which sustain it. When we find the very same things which the Bible proclaims as well pleasing to God acknowledged by them to be, in themselves, right and good, while they also acknowledge man is of himself too weak to practise them, we see man himself bearing witness to the purity of the Divine laws, to the corruption of his own nature, and to the need he has of a Redeemer and Sanctifier; and when we consider the discrepancy of philophical principles of morality with the absurdities and wickedness of the pagan religions, and the agreement of those same principles with the precepts of the Gospel (that Gospel which was preached by unlearned fishermen), we have the heathens themselves testifying, as it were, that their religions do not proceed from the God of Nature, and that ours does.

The deficiency of the heathen systems of morality was in their lack of those motives which the Gospel supplies, and of that Divine support and aid which is promised to the sincere Christian. A heathen moralist was like the fabled Prometheus of old, who is said to have fashioned a complete and well-formed human body, but could not endue it with the principle of *life*, till he had gone up to heaven to fetch down a vivifying fire from thence.

As there is no inconsistency in that training of a child by a human parent, so there is none in that training, during our present state of childhood on earth, by "our Father in heaven," which at once encourages profitable enquiry and represses impertinent curiosity; and which, while checking indiscriminate credulity, yet requires, in subjects beyond the reach of the learner's faculties, implicit faith on sufficient authority.

Those who profess, by simplifying and explaining the mysteries of the Christian religion, to make Faith easy, destroy in effect the very nature of it, considered as a duty; for there is surely no virtue in assenting to Euclid's propositions or anything demonstrable to the understanding. Such men in endeavouring to widen the strait gate, are guilty of much the same fault with those who turn aside from it in disgust. The latter will not believe what they find it impossible to explain; the former are resolved to explain what they find themselves compelled to believe.

The stamp and outer form of counterfeit and of genuine coin are alike — even *more* alike than two pieces of gold stamped differently; though, inwardly, the base metal and the gold differ in the real and essential point. And so it is with false and genuine faith. They are very much alike in outward semblance; but they differ in this all-important point—that false faith is a rash and unreasonable submission

of the will and understanding to a *supposed* Divine authority; true faith is a deliberate and rational submission to the guidance of an authority, *proved* by sufficient evidence to be Divine.

He who believes only what he sees, and does only what his understanding pronounces to be reasonable in each particular command of God, has evidently no faith. One who on a dark night at sea fancies he sees land before him, while gazing on a fog-bank, should at least not pretend to have as much faith in the pilot as one who believes on the pilot's word, that the land is near, and does not pretend to see it. For "Faith is the evidence of things *not* seen."

Faith is, as some have justly expressed it, "the hand with which the believer lays hold on the free offers of Divine mercy." "By grace are ye saved through faith" is the language of the Apostle. "*Through* faith," not *by* faith; for it is plain that if the believer were saved, strictly speaking, by his faith, he would be himself as much his own saviour as if he were saved by his works. And faith must be both rightly directed towards the object which we have good grounds for relying on; and also must be a lively (*i. e.*, living) faith, bringing forth good works and necessary fruit.

The practice of Paul must be strictly conformed to, of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual;" and of remembering that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto Him; neither can He know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

To urge the use and advantage of reason in religious enquiry, is not necessarily to imply that there are no secrets

in religion which reason alone cannot fully comprehend. As mere general intelligence is not sufficient to give a full and sufficient appreciation of a poem, or a picture without artistical or poetical taste, so men of ordinary intelligence may understand the great outlines of a doctrine, but unless they possess devotional taste, it will be to them a mere outline, a skeleton: very correct, perhaps, but wanting life and animation. The secret which gives it animation — "the secret of the Lord — is with them that fear Him," and, unlike the artistical or poetical taste, which is not given to all, this fear of the Lord may be possessed by every man, in proportion as he himself desires it, in virtue of the gracious promise that He will "give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." "If any man *will* do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." . . .

Though the Divine dispensation of spiritual aid is no longer miraculous, the presence of Christ no longer visible, for we "walk (wholly) by faith, not by sight," still that aid is not less real, that presence not less abiding. The Spirit ever "helpeth our infirmities." Our Divine Master has promised to "come unto them that love Him and keep His saying," and "to manifest Himself to them." He speaks to them, though not in a literally audible voice. He leads them, not less really than of old, though not literally, by the hand, for "as many," says the Apostle Paul, "as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." If we look earnestly, we shall see Him: if we listen attentively, we shall hear His voice.

It is clear to any one who seeks in earnest to be led by the Scriptures, that when our Saviour promises that the Holy Spirit, whom the Father should send in Christ's name, should

teach them all things and should "abide with" them "for ever,"—"that Spirit of Truth," whom, He said, they knew, "for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you: these words of His are not to be explained as relating merely to a system of doctrines and motives,—to an *abstract religious principle*, but to a real, individual, *personal* agent, operating on the minds of believers; which is called, amidst the diversity of operations, one and the same Spirit, not figuratively, as when we speak of the spirit of patriotism, the spirit of philosophical enquiry, and the like; but literally and numerically, one Being, even the one God whose temple is the whole body of the faithful; which temple they are warned not to "defile, lest God destroy" them. For, if any one could even so strain this last expression of the Apostle Paul, and likewise all the words of Christ Himself, as to interpret them into mere metaphor, it would still be impossible for him to conceive a mere principle of action — a Christian spirit in that transferred sense of the word, — enabling Christians to work *sensible miraeles;* and these we find distinctly attributed to the immediate agency of the Divine Spirit. And these sensible miracles served to prove, amongst other things, that the promised indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in His Church was not to be understood as a mere figure of speech, denoting their adherence to the doctrines He taught, and the possession of the inspired record of them, but a real, though unseen presence, by His Spirit; not the mere keeping of His commandments through love for his memory, but a spiritual union with Him; at once the promised reward, and the bond and support, of that obedient love, — the effect at once and cause of our "keeping His saying." "For if any man love Me," said He, "he will keep My saying, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

The influence of the Divine Spirit which our Lord promised, is not to be understood as confined to the Apostles and other early disciples, or to such miraculous powers as were conferred on them. Would Jesus have said in that case, "I pray not for them alone, but for those also who shall believe on me through their word?" Or would Paul, when writing to the Romans, who had at that time *received no miraculous gifts*, have said "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by *the Holy Ghost which is given* unto us; . . . . "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," . . . "if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you;" . . . "*if any man have not* the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His:" . . . "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit:" "Repent and be baptized," said Peter to the multitude, "into the name (for so the word should be rendered) of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord your God shall call." The gift of the Holy Spirit, therefore, is held out to all who have been thus called; *i. e.*, have heard the Gospel preached to them, and is as effectual for their private individual wants, as the miraculous powers bestowed on the Apostles were for the wants of the infant-church. To each of *us* is promised, no less the far more important benefit of the inward comfort, — the guidance, the spiritual sanctification of heart, which every man needs, and of which every Christian is invited to partake. The necessity of miraculous evidences to establish our religion has ceased; since enough evidence has been left to satisfy a candid mind. The gift of tongues is no longer required, since ignorant fishermen are not (as then) called upon suddenly to proclaim the Gospel in distant lands; but every individual Christian who comes into the world, being

born of the frail and sinful race of Adam, has need of being "born again," as our Lord says, "of water and of the Spirit, in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven." And we have daily need throughout our lives of the renewing influence of the Holy Spirit, to enable us to know and love God, since "no one," says our Lord, "can come unto me, except my Father who hath sent me draw him." We all need His heavenly light to clear our eyes from spiritual blindness, and to enable us to see all things in their true colours, and shape, and magnitude. We all need His "Spirit which helpeth our infirmities," that we may "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, and able to stand against the wiles of the devil." From all the delusions, in short, and from all the temptations in the world, the flesh, and the devil, the Christian can only be preserved by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him; which he has, therefore, as much need to seek, and may have as full confidence of obtaining, as the Apostles themselves.

One important distinction, with respect to the Divine assistance and spiritual endowment between the Christian Church and the Jewish, is, that whatever sanctifying aid may have been supplied under the Old Covenant, it was no *part* of that *Covenant;* — of the Christian covenant it is. God the Holy Ghost — God manifest in the Spirit, was not the *permanent Ruler* of the former Church, as He is of the Christian Church. He is our Promised and Permanent Comforter; He is the "*promise* of the Father" sent that "He may abide with us *for ever*."

The Apostles inferred this or that to be right or true from its being the suggestion of the Spirit as attested to them by miracles; we must reverse their procedure and judge any-

thing to be the suggestion of the Spirit by *its being* right and true, evidenced to us to be so by the Scripture, that record of the dictates of the Holy Ghost. If our life and faith are agreeable to the Gospel, this is the ground of confidence that they are right; and if right, they must come from that sanctifying, and enlightening, and supporting grace, which alone can raise to life the dead in sin, and purify man's corrupt nature, and effectually open his eyes to the truth, and "strengthen the feeble knees" to walk in God's paths.

The miraculous gift was only the proof and pledge of spiritual influence; the seal and earnest that the treasure had been bestowed, and not the treasure itself. And as the blaze of the pillar which guided the Israelites in the wilderness, and proved to them the Divine presence among them, was withdrawn when they were sufficiently convinced of that presence, and, as it were, familiar with the belief that the Lord was among them as their Protector and King — the manifestation of "the glory of the Lord" being thenceforward enclosed within the Most Holy place;—so the outward and sensible marks of God's presence in His Church were gradually withdrawn, when sufficient evidence had been afforded of that presence; which is still not less real or less effectual than before; and which is no longer miraculously displayed, only because it has been already sufficiently proved.

There is an opposite error to the looking for sensible demonstrations to the mind of being under spiritual influence. It is that of those who acknowledge in *general terms* the existence and the necessity of the ordinary operations of the Spirit, but explain them away in each particular case; and

thus completely nullify the doctrine. They allow that Christians are to expect the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost; but each separate work in which this Divine agency can possibly operate, being of course such as right reason would approve, they refer to right reason alone; and by this means they exclude one by one every possible instance in which the *ordinary* grace of the Spirit *can* operate; for anything which could *not* be traced to any natural cause, would clearly be miraculous. But a doctrine which is true generally, cannot be false in every particular instance. In fact, what we mean by the ordinary operation of the Holy Spirit, is His operation through second causes; His aid to our endeavours; His blessing upon the means of grace. We are taught to pray for our daily bread as God's gift, though it is not like manna showered miraculously from the skies; and every Christian thought, and word, and deed is no less "from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," though it come not accompanied with fiery tongues, and the "sound of a mighty wind." Its Christian goodness is the sign of its spiritual origin.

ON THE APPEAL OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH TO THE AFFECTIONS.

THE Gospel turns to its own gracious purposes all the tendencies of human nature that are not evil. It stops not the current, but directs it into the proper channel.

One of the most striking peculiarities of the gospel of the Lord Jesus is its continual appeal to the affections. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." Here is the best principle set forth, and the best application of it; the purest

motive and the most perfect practice. The love of Christ is the proper ground of our obedience; and our obedience, the proper effect, and the sure test, of our love for Christ.

Reason can no more influence the will, and operate as a motive, than the eyes which show a man his road can enable him to move from place to place; or that a ship, provided with a compass, can sail without a wind.

The apostle John, when he said, "No man hath seen God at any time," seems to have had in mind not merely the difficulty to such a creature as man, of making a being whose nature is so incomprehensible that our knowledge of Him is chiefly negative, a steady object of thought; but also that still greater difficulty of setting his affections on this awful and inconceivable Being;—of addressing, as a tender parent, Him who has formed out of nothing, and could annihilate in a moment, countless myriads, perhaps, of worlds besides our own; and to whom "the nations are but as the drop of a bucket, and the small dust of a balance;" — of imploring favour and deprecating punishment from Him who has no passions or wants as we have; — the difficulty, in short, of holding spiritual intercourse with One with whom we can have no sympathy, and of whom we can with difficulty form any clear conception. But the apostle adds, "The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him;" and thus seems to have conceived such a "declaration" of God as calculated not, indeed, wholly to remove these impediments to love and devotion, but so far to moderate and lower them as to leave them no longer insuperable to a willing mind.

The Divine "Word was made flesh" to lead us to affectionate piety, and the manhood was taken into God to teach

us Godlike virtue. The one purpose may be said to have been to bring down God to man; the other to lift up man towards God.

God sent His Son into the world to proclaim peace to all who should hear and accept His offers. He came to encounter and overcome Satan — to offer up Himself as a sacrifice —"the just for the unjust"—and to proclaim pardon, not as if sin were a light thing in God's sight, but as purchased by the precious and "innocent blood." He came to "bind up the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives;" and promised to come unto them that should love Him, and to make His abode in them by His Spirit; that they might be enabled to follow the bright example He had set them, and thus to live in peace with God — to become the sons of God, and after death to enter into His eternal rest; the reward which He, not they, had earned.

The burden of grief may, indeed, be lightened by the sympathy of others; but the burden of *guilt* can be taken off our consciences only by God's forgiveness. Men forget, that for bearing both burdens they have a great High Priest in heaven, Jesus, the Son of God, who "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows;" upon whom "the chastisement of our peace was laid, and by whose stripes we are healed;" who "can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," having been Himself "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin;" being subject to all the wants, infirmities, and temptations incident to His, and our, human nature. All this calls for our sympathy as well as reverence and gratitude; and the affectionate attachment thus so naturally generated will adhere (if I may so express myself) to the divine nature of the Saviour also, and when

we worship Him, though we worship Him not as man, but as God, still it will give an affectionate fervour to our devotions, to have an habitual remembrance, that this very God was also man, deigning for our sakes to be "made flesh, and dwell among us," "taking upon Him the form of a servant, and humbling Himself even unto the death of the cross."

It seems to be commonly taken for granted that whenever the feelings are strongly excited, they are necessarily overexcited; it may be that they are only brought into the state which the occasion fully justifies; or even that they still fall short of this. Stimulants are not to be condemned, as necessarily bringing the body into an unnatural state, because they raise the circulation; in a fever this would be hurtful; but there may be a torpid, lethargic disease in which an excitement of the circulation is precisely what is wanted to bring it into a healthy condition.

Men are not satisfied with pointing out to a young person the necessity of being diligent in his business, inasmuch as on that depends his subsistence, and all his hopes of wealth and distinction; but they strive also to inspire him with a *love* for his employment — a *taste* for his profession, as the best safeguard against the many temptations to indolence and dissipation. Surely the path of Christian duty is not beset with fewer temptations, nor is it less necessary to engage the feelings on the side of duty, to fix the affections on the Redeemer.

No man would much prize a friend (indeed, he would be reckoned unworthy of the name) who felt no regard for him, but did him service merely because he perceived it was for

his own interest. Nor will Christ accept this kind of service from His followers. He requires them to give up their hearts to Him and to obey Him, not merely as "servants," but as "friends."

The language of promise and threatening — the appeal to the reason and to the interests of men—is not the prevailing character—not the general tone, as it were, of the discourses of Christ and His Apostles when addressing *believers*. They hold out a nobler and purer motive. They chiefly insist on love towards Christ, not certainly as a *substitute* for obedience, but as the *foundation* of obedience — as the great principle, the main spring of Christian conduct, — they urge us to fix those warm affections which God has implanted in our breasts, and which were never meant to be rooted out, on the most suitable and noblest objects. "The love of Christ constraineth us," says Paul, and "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again."

Christ and His Apostles well knew that a cold address to the understanding — a mere chain of arguments — serves rather to make men acknowledge what they ought to do than to excite them actually to do it. It may lead them to *think* rightly about religion, but not to *feel* and *act* rightly. It is like the moonlight — clear, indeed, and beautiful, but powerless and cold; *their* preaching, on the contrary, was like the light of the sun, which warms while it illuminates, and not only adorns but fertilizes the earth.

The object of friendship is not certain qualities merely, but a certain individual person. The cravings of an affec-

tionate heart can only be satisfied with the *very person* on whom it is fixed. Therefore that peculiar characteristic of our religion which consists in its continual reference to *persons*, and especially to that Great Person who is the Author of it, rather than to abstract things, is eminently calculated to win over the affections, and to gain the heart. And strikingly is this characteristic exhibited by the Apostle Paul, whether in speaking of the Christian's hopes, or of the Christian's duties. If the latter be his theme, it is not of Christian virtue *in the abstract* that he speaks most often, but of it embodied, exemplified, represented, *personified* in Jesus Christ. He speaks of "walking in love, as Christ also hath loved us;" of "putting on Christ;" of "being buried *with Him* in baptism;" of "being risen with Christ;" "looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith," at every step. And on the other hand he does not speak so much of eternal happiness *in the abstract* as of the happiness of an intimate union with our Great Master; to die is, with Him, to depart and *to be with Christ;*" after "having suffered with Him, to reign also *with Him;*" of "the crown of glory," which He, the righteous Lord, has prepared for all that "*love his appearing;*" and his encouragement to the Thessalonians is, "so shall we ever be *with the Lord.*" And this tone is the more remarkable in the expressions of Paul, from the circumstance that he was not, like the other Apostles, personally acquainted with Jesus while on earth. Thus also the Evangelist John (as well befitted the beloved disciple) places both all Christian perfection in conformity to the pattern, and all happiness and glory in admission to the presence of our Great Master. "We know not what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; as much as to say, even the very hope of hereafter "being with the Lord," leads

believers to conform themselves to the example of His purity: and the actual enjoyment of His presence will carry further and complete that resemblance to their Divine Master, which they are now, through the promised aid of God's sanctifying Spirit, striving after. And our Lord's own language is of the same tone: as the motive He seeks to implant in the disciple's breast is, as has been said, love, gratitude and reverence for Himself; so the encouragement He sets before them is the hope, not merely of happiness in the abstract, but of intimate union and close intercourse with Himself: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." "If a man love Me, he will keep my saying, and My Father will love him, and *We will come unto him*, and make our abode with him." "I will not leave you comfortless, I will *come unto you*." "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

MISCELLANEOUS APOPHTHEGMS.

Four kinds of bad examples do us harm: — 1. Those we imitate; 2. those we proudly exult over; 3. those which drive us into an opposite *extreme;* and 4. those which lower our *standard.* A man is always in danger of being satisfied, and perhaps, more than satisfied, if he does but excel; and excellence is relative. Whence it comes that bad examples do much the greatest amount of evil among those who do *not* follow them. For *one* who is corrupted by becoming as bad as a bad example, there are ten that are debased by becoming *content* with being *better.*

An honest man has, *cæteris paribus,* a better knowledge of human nature than a knave; because he knows that there *are* knaves; while the other generally disbelieves the existence of honest men. Inferior motives, self-interest, love of ease, &c., are understood by all, because they exist in all. The higher motives do not exist in the baser part of mankind, who, consequently, are apt not to believe in them. It is to this Miss Edgeworth alludes, when she speaks of the class of persons who "divide all mankind into knaves and fools; and when they meet with an honest man, do not know what to make of him."

The poet who said, "Little things are great to little men," might have added, "Great things are little to little men."

As a great part of the pleasure afforded by wit results from a *perception of skill* displayed and difficulty surmounted,

jests on sacred subjects afford the least gratification to judges of good taste, for this reason, (apart from all higher considerations,) that they are the most easily produced of any; the contrast between a dignified and a low image exhibited in combination, (in which the whole force of the ludicrous consists,) being in this case the most striking.

Lord Byron, though a dangerous writer to the very thoughtless, may, in his later works, prove a very serviceable writer to a person of tolerable good sense, by furnishing a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole system of scoffing.

A Socinian, we will say, who fancies ridicule the test of truth, thinks he has made the doctrine of the incarnation appear perfectly absurd by having held it up to ridicule and scorn; professing all along, and perhaps, feeling, the most serious veneration for Christianity. But the Deist finds it very easy to employ the same plan for his purposes; for, in fact, "everything," says the proverb, "has two handles," and it is not difficult to place Christianity in such a point of view that it shall seem extravagant and ridiculous, and so to interweave with every part of it absurd ideas, and to suggest low and ludicrous associations that it shall seem unworthy of serious notice. Meantime, he is perhaps not at all aware of what he is about, not dreaming that what he calls natural religion may be laughed down, just on the same plan. The Atheist does this for him, making the whole constitution and course of nature appear a joke — the universe, a whimsical and random jumble of atoms; yet he will still have some ground to stand on, as he will talk very big of conforming to the excellence of human nature, of the perfectibility of the species, and of virtue being its own reward, &c.

Next comes the philosopher, or philosophico-sentimentalist of some of the German schools, who, in like manner, holds up to scorn all rules of ethics — all pretence of acting on fixed principles; and is all for "listening to the dictates of the heart," "following the impulse of unsophisticated nature," &c., &c. If, therefore, you ask *him* whether there is anything at all that is worthy of serious regard, he will refer you to those feelings as what ought to be so considered. Then forth steps Lord Byron, and shows you that it is not a whit more difficult to turn into ridicule all the most natural feelings of the human heart; thus overthrowing the last stronghold to which reason, or anything partaking of reason, can retire; extinguishing this last faint glimmer of twilight, on the same principle by which the utmost brilliancy that human wisdom can attain had been quenched.

A man of any considerate common sense will be apt to pause at this, and reflect, that since there surely is *something* which is not a mere joke, and since it now appears plain that there is nothing which may not be so represented, by one who has the knack of setting things in an absurd point of view, it may be as well, to try over again, with serious candour, everything which has been hastily given up as fit only for ridicule, and to abandon the system of scoffing altogether; looking at everything on the right side as well as the wrong, and trying how any system will look standing upright, as well as topsy-turvy.

There seems to me a considerable resemblance between Lord Byron, Voltaire in his *Candide*, and Swift in his *Houghymns;* viz., that each seems to satirize not merely any class of mankind in general, as they are, but human nature in the abstract: one might suppose each to be a being (as, I think, Mad. de Staël says of Voltaire) of a different species.

Swift does not, however, so fully answer the purpose of a *reductio ad absurdum*, because though he laughs at, and abuses, everything that *is*, he seems to have a real value for something that is *conceivable*. The ridicule, however, which, in his account of Lagoda he throws indiscriminately on all projects of improvement, (for he represents his man of sense not as steering a middle course, but as being against *all* alterations, wishing to let everything remain just as it was,) when compared with the improvements which have, since his time, taken place in agricultural implements, machinery of various sorts, gas-lamps, rail-roads, steamboats, and numberless things connected with chemistry, abundantly prove how possible, and how easy, it is to make what is perfectly rational and highly dignified, assume an air of the wildest and most ludicrous absurdity. Astronomy and electricity have been most copiously ridiculed in their time; — see a satire of *Hudibras*—Butler!—on the Royal Society, soon after its establishment.

It is a good plan, with a young person of a character to be much affected by ludicrous and absurd representations, to show him plainly, by examples, that there is *nothing* which may not be so represented; he will hardly need to be told that every thing is not a mere joke, and he may thus be secured from falling into a contempt of those particular things, which he may, at any time, happen to find so treated.

Certainly, it cannot be said that Lord Byron has put vice in the most seductive form; for he always places it in company with acute suffering or dismal gloom. And though, in many instances, he has conferred a dignity on his vicious character, nearly (not quite) as seductive as that of Milton's Satan, yet in *Don Juan* he has robbed it even of dignity. His writings, however, may do harm to the very thoughtless.

Sophistry, like poison, is at once detected and nauseated, when presented to us in a concentrated form; but a fallacy which, when stated barely in a few sentences, would not deceive a child, may deceive half the world, if diluted in a quarto volume. It is true, in a course of argument, as in mechanics, that "nothing is stronger than its weakest part," and consequently a chain which has one faulty link will break; but though the number of the sound links adds nothing to the *strength* of the chain, it adds much to the chance of the faulty one's *escaping observation*.

It must not be expected that reason will universally make its way. "*Medicamenta*," says the medical aphorism, "*non agunt incadaver*." Those in whom indolence is combined with pride, will be induced, by the one, to remain in their position, and, by the other, to fortify it as well as they can.

A safe man, in the estimation of most people, is one, not whose views are, on the whole, most reasonable, but one who is free from all errors *except vulgar* errors.

Galileo, probably, would have escaped persecution, if his discoveries could have been disproved, and his reasonings refuted.

A crude theory, in the language of some men, means one, which (being new) has not first occurred to themselves.

A superfluous truism to one person, may be a revolting paradox to another.

An incorrect analogy, constantly before us, is like a distorted mirror in the apartment we inhabit, producing a fixed

and habitual false impression. Such a familiar, seeming analogy between the several professions, has led men to feel, rather than distinctly maintain, that as they confide the care of their bodily health to the physician, and of their legal transactions to the lawyer, so they may commit to a distinct order of men, the care of their religious concerns, and serve God by proxy.

Man, except when unusually depraved, retains enough of the image of his Maker to have a natural reverence for religion, and a desire that God should be worshipped; but through the corruption of his nature, his heart is (except when divinely purified) too much alienated from God to take delight in serving Him. Hence, the disposition men have ever shown to substitute the devotion of the priest for their own: — to leave the duties of piety in his hands, and to let him serve God in their *stead*. This disposition is not so much the *consequence*, as itself the *origin*, of priest-craft.

The frequency with which we hear profane discourse, intemperance, or devotedness to frivolous amusements, characterized as "unbecoming a clergyman," in a sort of tone which implies the speaker's feeling to be, that they are unbecoming merely to a *clergyman*, not to a Christian, is a proof of the general tendency to vicarious religion, which makes men, who take little care to keep their own lights burning, desirous to have one to whom they may apply in their extremity, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out."

An *exemplary* character, according to the notions of some, is one whose example no one is expected to follow.

To trace any error to its source, will often throw more

light on the subject in hand, than can be obtained, if we rest satisfied with merely detecting and refuting it.

Men delight in everything *peculiar*, whether an advantage or not.

It is seldom that a man labours well in his minor department, unless he overrates it. It is lucky for us, that the bee does not look upon the honeycomb in the same light we do.

That is suitable to a man in point of ornamental expense, not which he can afford to *have*, but which he can afford to *lose*.

Never let a confidence be forced upon you.

Hard labour is not whenever you are very actively employed, but when you *must* be.

To be always thinking about your manners, is not the way to make them good; because the very perfection of manners is *not* to think about yourself.

The love of admiration leads to fraud, much more than the love of commendation; but, on the other hand, the latter is much more likely to spoil our good actions by the substitution of an inferior motive.

The tendency of the love of commendation is to make a man *exert* himself; of the love of admiration, to make him *puff* himself.

If a man is content with the opinion of virtue or ability, he seems manifestly prizing a mere shadow, and we exclaim

against such pure vanity; but if a person can be universally and constantly *believed* to possess beauty, or a fine ring, he has *all* that the actual possession of them could confer; you cannot therefore so well blame a person for pursuing a shadow, in a case where the substance is valued only for the sake of the shadow.

As one of the earliest dawning, and most important, differences between individuals is the degree and manner in which they desire approbation, so it is one of the most striking in their respective behaviours. As with children, some are anxious to attract notice, and wanting you to observe them when playing, while another even of the same family is quite independent, and satisfied in solitude: so also with grown persons; one man is considering at every step what people think of him; the other, comparatively, concerns himself little about it: the one speaks as if he wanted to say something — the other as if he had something to say. The manner generated by the former habit, has been, aptly enough, called *conscious*, which perfectly accords with Adam Smith's account of conscience; viz., the judgment which we pronounce on our own conduct by putting ourselves in the place of a by-stander.

While we are taking pains with our morals, we are taking pains with that which is the most important; when about manners, we are attending to the surface, instead of the substance. Take care of the digestion and circulation, if you would keep them sound; if you would keep the skin clear, take care (not of the skin, but) of the digestion and circulation.

He will please most who is aiming, not to *please*, but to *give pleasure*.

It is remarkable that great affectation, and great absence of it (unconsciousness), are at first sight very similar; — they are both apt to produce singularity.

Though many conscious people are very agreeable, there is a charm in unconscious manners, which endears a person, even when there is nothing else very remarkable in him. Social intercourse is in itself a pleasure, independent of the instruction or entertainment we may derive from the matter and language; else books would be, which they are not, a complete substitute for society: hence it appears, that the essence of social intercourse is the interchange of ideas, as they arise actually in the minds of the speakers; the excellence of it, therefore, in social intercourse, must consist in complete unconsciousness; the further you recede from that, (and there are infinite degrees), however clever your conversation, the less have you of the nature of a companion, and the more of a book; consequently Consciousness is, as it were, the specific poison of that which is the very essence of conversation. All disregard of self also is so amiable, that unconsciousness seems to be almost a virtue. In the pulpit, it is quite: an ambassador from heaven should not dare to be thinking of himself, and trying to be a fine man, when he should only be thinking of his message. How would the practice of this virtue, with singleness of heart, by the clergy, increase the effect produced by them!

A student of mathematics, after having gone through, and seemingly understood, Euclid's proof, that the squares of the sides containing a right angle, are equal to the square of the side, subtending it, remarked, to the astonishment and dismay of his teacher, "But it is not really so, is it, Sir?" Many, who would laugh at this query, might yet be found

assenting to all the reasoning on which some political or other measure should be maintained, and then coolly remarking, that it is practically false, though theoretically true: or, themselves maintaining some principles of moral conduct, which yet, they consider themselves as not bound to exemplify in their own practice, though they may be very suitable to a *moral* tale. And in proportion as men are accustomed (much more, children) to contemplate and admire virtue, without being taught, by example or otherwise, that they are expected to realize the picture, they will become the less fitted for the actual performance of their duties.

A large volume might be composed of moral apophthegms which are commonly uttered, and readily admitted, but which were never practically believed by any one.

Men's moral maxims, in general, are, like Peter Pindar's razors, made not to shave, but to sell.

Ethical maxims are bandied about as a sort of current coin of discourse, and being never melted down for use, those that are of base metal are never detected.

The charity of some persons consists in proceeding on the supposition, that to believe in the existence of an injury is to cherish implacable resentment, and that it is impossible to forgive, except where there is nothing to be forgiven. It is obvious that these notions render nugatory the gospel precepts. Why should we be called upon to render good for evil, if we are bound always to explain away that evil, and call it good? Where there is manifestly just ground for complaint, we should accustom ourselves to say, "That man owes me an hundred pence!" Thus, at once recalling to our mind the parable of him who rigorously enforced his

own claims, when he had been forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents.

To *dwell upon* the faults of a parent or a friend, or even a stranger, is wrong; but it is absolutely necessary to perceive and acknowledge them; for, if we think ourselves bound to vindicate them in another, we shall not be very likely to condemn them in ourselves. Self-love will, most likely, demand fair play, and urge that what is right in another is not wrong in us; and thus we shall have been perverting our own principles of morality.

Most precepts that are given are so *general* that they cannot be *applied*, except by an exercise of just as much discretion as would be sufficient to frame them.

Most men will agree that practice without principle, or *vice versâ*, is not enough; but they can seldom understand, that when both are right, something more may yet be, and often is, wanting; viz., that the practice should spring from the principle.

Any Christian minister who should confine himself to what are sometimes (erroneously) called "practical sermons," — *i. e.*, mere moral essays, without any mention of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity,—is in the same condition with the heathen philosophers, with this difference, that what was their *misfortune* is his *fault*.

It is too generally true, that all that is required to make men unmindful what they owe to God for any blessing, is, that they should receive that blessing often enough, and regularly enough.

Early and long familiarity is apt to generate a careless,—I might almost say, a stupid, indifference to many objects, which, if new to us, would excite a great and a just admiration: and many are inclined even to hold cheap a stranger, who expresses wonder at what seems to us very natural and simple, merely because we have been used to it, while, in fact, perhaps, our apathy is a more just subject of contempt than his astonishment.

The liability to mistake for the wisdom of man, that which is in truth the wisdom of God, is manifested in nothing, perhaps, more than in overlooking the evidences of the Divine wisdom in the provisions made for the progress of society. In the bodily structure of man, and in the result of instinct in brutes, we plainly perceive innumerable marks of wise contrivance, in which it is plain that man and the brute can have had no share. But when *human* conduct tends to some desirable end, and when the agents are competent to perceive that the end is desirable, and the means well adapted to it, we are apt to forget that those means were not devised, nor those ends proposed, by the persons themselves who are employed. For instance, let any one propose to himself the problem of supplying with daily provisions the inhabitants of such a city as London, — that "province covered with houses." Let any one consider this problem in all its bearings, — reflecting on the enormous and fluctuating number of persons to be fed, the immense quantity, and the variety, of the provisions to be furnished, the importance of a convenient distribution of them, and the necessity of husbanding them discreetly, lest a deficient supply, even for a single day, should produce distress, or a redundancy, from the perishable nature of many of them, produce a corresponding waste; and then, let him reflect on the anxious toil which such a task

would impose on a Board of the most experienced and intelligent commissaries, who, after all, would be able to discharge their office but very inadequately. Yet this object is accomplished far better than it could be by any effort of human wisdom, through the agency of men, who think each of nothing beyond his own immediate interest,—who, with that object in view, perform their respective parts with cheerful zeal, —and combine unconsciously to employ the wisest means for effecting an object, the vastness of which it would bewilder them even to contemplate. Can any of the admirable marks of contrivance and design, in the anatomical structure of the human body, and in the instincts of the brute creation, be more admirable than that beneficent wisdom of Providence, by which not corporeal particles, but rational free agents, co-operate in systems no less manifestly indicating design, — yet no design of theirs; and though acted on, not by gravitation and impulse, like inert matter, but by motives addressed to the will, yet advance as regularly and as effectually the accomplishment of an object they never contemplated, as if they were merely the passive wheels of a machine.

Human conduct with regard to knowledge, furnishes an instance, as far as respects the object not being contemplated by the agent, of a procedure precisely analogous to that of instinct. Knowledge would not have made the advances it has made, if it had been promoted only by persons influenced by pure public spirit. The greater part of it is the gift, not of human, but of Divine benevolence, which has implanted in man a thirst after knowledge for its own sake, accompanied with a sort of instinctive desire, founded probably on sympathy, of communicating it to others as an ultimate end.

It is now generally acknowledged that relief afforded to want, as mere want, tends to increase that want; while the relief afforded to the sick, the infirm, and the disabled, has plainly no tendency to multiply its own objects. Now it is remarkable, that the Lord Jesus employed His miraculous power in healing the sick *continually*, but in feeding the hungry only twice; while the power of multiplying food which He then manifested, as well as His directing the disciples to take care and gather up the fragments that remained that nothing might be lost, served to mark that the abstaining from any like procedure on other occasions was deliberate design. In this, besides other objects, our Lord had probably in view to afford us some instruction, from his example, as to the mode of our charity. Certain it is, that the reasons for this distinction are now, and ever must be, the same as at that time. Now to those engaged in that important and inexhaustible subject of enquiry, the internal evidences of Christianity, it will be interesting to observe here, one of the instances in which the super-human wisdom of Jesus forestalled the discovery of an important principle, often overlooked, not only by the generality of men, but by the most experienced statesmen and the ablest philosophers, even in these later ages of extended human knowledge, and development of mental power.

One of the most interesting and important points in Natural Theology is, the *combination* of physical laws with *instincts adapted* to them. One instance, out of many, of this principle, may be taken as a sample, — that of the instinct of suction, as connected with the whole process of rearing young animals. The calf sucks, and its mother equally desires to be disburthened of its milk. Thus there are two instincts tending the same way. Moreover, the calf

has an appetite for grass also; it takes hold of the grass, chews and swallows it; but it does not bite but sucks the teat. But it is also necessary that there should be a physical adaptation of the atmosphere to the instinct of the animal. It is the pressure of the atmosphere upon the part, and the withdrawal of that pressure within the young animal's mouth, which forces out the milk. Here is an adaptation of instinct to the physical constitution of the atmosphere. Yet again, all this would be insufficient without the addition of that *storge*, or instinctive parental affection, which leads the dam carefully to watch and defend its young. The most timid animals are ready to risk their lives, and undergo any hardships, to protect their young, which is a feeling quite distinct from the gratification felt by the dam from her offspring drawing her milk. Here, then, are several instincts, and the adaptation of the atmosphere to one of those instincts, all combining towards the preservation of the species; which form, in conjunction, as clear an indication of design as can be conceived. It is hardly possible to conceive any plainer mark of design, unless a person were beforehand to say that he intended to do a certain thing. Yet this is not all; for the secretion of milk is not common to both sexes, and all ages, and all times. Here is the secretion of milk at a particular time, just corresponding with the need for it. If we found sickles produced at harvest, fires lighted when the weather is cold, and sails spread when favourable winds blow, we should see clearly that these things were designed to effect a certain end or object. Now, in the case of the mother and the young, there is a secretion of milk at a particular period, and in an animal of a distinct sex — the one which has given birth to the young. Yet the perpetuation of the species might take place if the milk had been provided so as to be constant in all ages and sexes. But what we do

see is, means provided for an end, and just commensurate to that end.

To perceive *a* reason for anything that God has done is far different from perceiving *the* reason.

A fool can ask more questions than a wise man can answer; but a wise man cannot ask more questions than he will find a fool ready to answer.

It usually requires that a man should have some confidence in his own understanding to venture to say, "What has been spoken is unintelligible to me."

He that is not aware of his ignorance, will be only misled by his knowledge.

Young students should remember, that by a confession of real ignorance must real knowledge be gained; and even when that further knowledge is not gained, still even the knowledge of the ignorance is a great thing in itself, — so great, it seems, as to have constituted Socrates the wisest of his time.

Some of the chief sources of *unknown* ignorance are to be found in our not being aware, 1. How inadequate a medium language is for conveying thought. 2. How inadequate our very minds are for the comprehension of many things. 3. How little we need understand a word which may yet be familiar to us, and which we may use in reasoning. This piece of ignorance is closely connected with the two foregoing. (Hence, frequently men will accept as an explanation of a phenomenon, a mere statement of the difficulty

in other words.) 4. How utterly ignorant we are of efficient causes; and how the philosopher who refers to the law of gravitation the falling of a stone to the earth, no further explains the phenomenon than the peasant, who would say it is the nature of it. The philosopher knows that the stone obeys the *same* law to which all *other* bodies are subject, and to which, for convenience, he gives the name of gravitation. His knowledge is only more general than the peasant's, which, however, is a vast advantage. 5. How many words there are that express, not the nature of the things they are applied to, but the manner in which they *affect us:* and which therefore give about as correct a notion of those things, as the word "crooked" would if applied to a stick half immersed in water. (Such is the word chance, with all its family.) 6. How many causes may and usually do, conduce to the same effect. 7. How liable the faculties, even of the ablest, are to occasional failure; so that they shall overlook mistakes (and those often the most at variance with their own established notions) which, *when once exposed* seem quite gross even to inferior men. 8. How much all are biassed, in all their moral reasonings, by self-love, or perhaps, rather, partiality to *human nature* and other passions. 9. Dugald Stewart would add very justly, How little we know of *matter;* no more indeed than of mind; though all are prone to attempt explaining the phenomena of mind by those of matter: for what is *familiar* men generally consider as *well known*, though the fact is oftener otherwise. The errors arising from these causes, from not calculating on them, — that is, in short, from ignorance of our own ignorance, have probably impeded philosophy more than all other obstacles put together.

"A little learning" is then only (and then always) "a dangerous thing," when we are not aware of its littleness.

"A little learning is a dangerous thing," and yet it is what *all* must attain before they can arrive at great learning; it is the utmost acquisition of those who know the most, in comparison of what they do *not* know. The field of science may be compared to an American forest, in which the more trees a man cuts down, the greater is the expanse of wood he sees around him.

An error in physics and science is nothing so long as it is not taught as a part of religion. If taught as such, it becomes a lever placed underneath a man's religious principles, which will heave up and overthrow them; for as soon as he discovers it to *be* error, he thinks he has got a demonstration of the falsity of the revelation, of which he has been told it is a part.

It is not over-education, but *misdirected* education, that is to be deprecated.

It has been objected, that to educate the children of the poor disqualifies them for an humble and laborious station in life, — and it is indeed possible so to educate children as to unfit them for it: but this mistake does not so much consist in the *amount* of the knowledge imparted, as in the *kind* and the *manner* of education. Habits early engrafted on children, of regular attention, — of steady application to what they are about,—of prompt obedience to the directions they receive, — of cleanliness, order, and decent and modest behaviour, cannot but be of advantage to them in after life, whatever their station may be. And certainly, their familiar acquaintance with the precepts and example of Him who, when all stations of life were at His command, chose to be the reputed son of a poor mechanic, and to live with peasants

and fishermen; or, again, of His apostle Paul, whose own hands ministered to his necessities, and to those of his companions: such studies, I say, can surely never tend to unfit any one for a life of humble and contented industry.

The dangers of knowledge are not to be compared with the dangers of ignorance. Man is more likely to miss his way in darkness than in *twilight;* in twilight than in full sun.

While the pedantry of learning and science has often been dwelt upon, and deservedly ridiculed, there is another danger on the opposite side, which is rarely, if ever, mentioned; yet it is a folly quite as great as the other; of a yet more intolerable character, and still more hopeless. — I mean what may be called "the pedantry of common-sense and experience." For one person who is overbearing you on account of his knowledge of technical terms, you will find five or six, still more provokingly impertinent, with their common-sense and experience. Their common-sense will be found nothing more than common prejudice; and their experience will be found to consist in the fact that they have done a thing wrong very often, and fancy they have done it right. In former times, men knew by experience that the earth stands still, and the sun rises and sets. Common-sense taught them that there could be no antipodes; since men could not stand with their heads downwards, like flies on the ceiling. Experience taught the King of Bantam that water could not become solid. And the experience and common-sense of one of the most observant and intelligent of historians, Tacitus, convinced him that for a mixed government to be so framed as to combine the elements of royalty, aristocracy, and democracy, must be next to impossible, and that

if such a one could be framed, it must inevitably be very speedily dissolved.

Since the sailor, the physician, and every other practitioner, each in his own department, gives the preference to unassisted common-sense only in those cases where he himself has nothing else to trust to, and invariably resorts to the rules of art wherever he possesses the knowledge of them, it is plain that mankind universally bear their testimony, though unconsciously and often unwillingly, that systematic knowledge is preferable to conjectural judgments, and that common-sense is only our *second best guide.*

There is a story told of some gentleman, who, on being asked whether he could play on the violin, made answer that he really did not know whether he could or not, because he had never tried. There is at least more modesty in this expression of doubt, than those show who discuss, with the most unhesitating confidence, the most difficult questions of Political Economy, while not only ignorant, but *professedly* ignorant, and designing to continue so, of the whole subject; neither having, nor pretending to have, nor wishing for, any fixed principles by which to regulate their judgment on each point. And this glaring absurdity they conceal from themselves, and from each other, by keeping clear of the title by which the science is commonly designated, while the subjects which constitute the proper and sole province of that science, they do not scruple to submit to extemporaneous discussion. Decisions on questions concerning taxation, tithes, the national debt, the poor-laws, the wages which labourers earn, or ought to earn, the comparative advantages of different modes of charity, and numberless others, are boldly pronounced, by many who utterly disclaim having turned their

attention to Political Economy. This is as if the gentleman in the story just alluded to, had declared his inability to play on the violin, at the same time expressing his confidence that he could play on the fiddle.

Those who are too lazy to take the pains of acquiring accurate knowledge on some point on which they are ignorant, and, at the same time, too proud to own their ignorance, shelter themselves under the convenient plea of being adherents of common-sense, and decry speculative doctrines, which would be pernicious in practice. The censure may, in some instances, chance to be right; and so, perhaps, might the grapes in the fable have been really sour — but the fox would have had a better right to pronounce upon them if he had first contrived to taste them. In fact, every theory which fails in practice, must, if duly examined, be found to contain some flaw in principle; and the wiser and more effectual (though not the least laborious) procedure, is, to detect its errors, and to condemn it, not for being a theory, but for being an unsound one. Common-sense (at least the most common sort of it) seems to be little better than the offspring of pride and indolence.

Men are often misled by resting on the authority of *Experience*. Not that experience ought not to be allowed to have great weight, but that men are apt not to consider with sufficient attention what it is that constitutes Experience in each point; and therefore need to be warned, first, that *time* alone does not constitute Experience; so that many years may have passed over a man's head, without his even having had the same opportunities of acquiring it as another much younger. Secondly, that the longest practice in conducting any business in one way, does not necessarily confer any Experience

in conducting it in a different way; *e. g.*, an experienced husbandman, or minister of state in Persia, would be much at a loss in Europe. And, thirdly, that merely being conversant about a certain class of *subjects*, does not confer Experience in a case where the *operations*, and the *end* proposed, are different; as if a man had dealt largely in corn all his life who had never seen a field of wheat growing; this man would doubtless have acquired by experience an accurate judgment of the qualities of each description of corn,—of the best methods of storing it,—of the arts of buying and selling it at proper times, &c.; but he would have been greatly at a loss in its cultivation, though he had been, in a certain way, long *conversant* about corn. So the experience of practical men, which is often appealed to in opposition to those who are called theorists, will be sometimes found on an attentive examination to be, in fact, the results of a more *confined* instead of a *wider* experience, or to consist in their having for a long time gone on in a certain beaten track, from which they never tried, or witnessed, or even imagined, a deviation. It may be added, that there is a proverbial maxim which bears witness to the advantage sometimes possessed by an observant by-stander over those actually engaged in any transaction, "The looker-on often sees more of the game than the players." Now the looker-on is precisely (in Greek θεωρὸς) the *theorist*."

Common notions are not necessarily common-*sense*.

The great discrepancy in the results of what are called Experience and Common-sense, as contradistinguished from theory, is accounted for by the fact, that men are so formed as often unconsciously to reason, whether well or ill, on the phenomena they observe, and to mix up their inferences with

their statements of those phenomena; so as in fact to theorize (however scantily or crudely) without knowing it. Hence it is that several different men, who have all had equal, or even the very same, experience, *i. e.*, have been witnesses or agents in the same transactions, will often be found to resemble so many different men looking at the same book: the object that strikes the eye is to all the same; the difference of the impressions produced on the mind of each is referable to the difference in their minds, and proportionate to the different degrees of their knowledge of the characters, the language, and the subject.

Most, if not all, who attain to a certain point of intellectual excellence have passed through two previous stages. The first is, that in which a man judges from obvious external appearances, adopts implicitly established notions and practices, assents without inquiry, and sees without much observation, or, at least, observes without much ambition to account for phenomena.

In the second stage, he eagerly examines, and endeavours to account for, everything; instead of being content with ignorance, he thinks his capacities equal to everything; he hastily rejects vulgar prejudices, and ridicules established customs, and is for altering, and reforming, and perfecting everything. The third state, which is that of mature judgment and enlarged views, though the most remote from the first, yet practically reapproaches to it: he now perceives the origin of many common notions and practices, and the utility even of many which are erroneous; he does many things and believes many things in common with the vulgar, though on different grounds; he has just that degree of respect for popular belief as neither to adopt nor reject it hastily; and he discriminates accurately where truth and falsehood, right

and wrong, are blended: he perceives the bonds of human capacity, and attempts not to explain what is beyond it; he perceives that many things which appear at first sight (or rather at second sight) faulty, are best as they are; and of those alterations which are really desirable, he perceives what are, and what are not, attainable. These three states may not unaptly be compared to those of the grub, chrysalis, and butterfly. The narrow views and lazy, implicit belief of the first state, are closely correspondent to the condition of the crawling grub, confined to the plant on which he was hatched, devouring it leaf after leaf, and minding nothing beyond: the chrysalis, wrapped in a fine web of his own spinning, neither increasing in bulk nor providing for the continuance of the species, and lost to all useful purposes, except the gradual inward change which is preparing him for a subsequent development, is not unlike some modifications of that above-mentioned second stage of intellect; in which a man is disgusted with common notions and practices, without having yet formed a better system of his own; is entangled and enclosed in fine-spun speculations, which withhold him from practical utility, and is, for a time, withdrawn from the world, in self-sufficient and torpid retirement. In some, however, this second stage assumes a more busy and bustling character, and raises them to a higher and more active condition than their first: they take a wider range than before; they attain general improvement, and approach, not only really but visibly, to their last point of perfection; these correspond to that more active chrysalis state with some insects, viz., the gnat, experience. The chrysalis of the gnat, instead of lying torpid or crawling at the bottom of the water, like the grub, darts about in that element with an agility, which seems an obvious approach to the brisk and airy range of the finished insect.

The third state of intellect — that of the sound and enlightened philosopher — is strikingly similar to that of the butterfly and the other various tribes of winged insects: their boundless range through the air; the brilliant wings, especially of the butterfly; its delicate diet of honey, and elegant apparatus for procuring it; its light hovering from flower to flower, with a preference, however, for the plant which it sprang from, and on which it lays the eggs that are to produce a future colony of creatures like itself: all correspond remarkably (as well as the curious Greek name of ψυχη) with the richly-stored and cultivated mind, the refined and lofty pursuits, the extensive range and enlarged views of the philosopher, as also with his partial return, though on new principles and, as it were, hovering on wings, to his first notions and practices, together with his useful exertions for the transmission of knowledge, and enjoyment, and for the general good of his species.

In using the above comparison, which will be found not only entertaining, but extremely convenient, in saving long descriptions by a mere allusion to it, two modifications are to be kept in view; — First, that the changes from one of these states to another are not (as in the insect) entire and complete; and, second, that they frequently never take place at all. Thus you will find, indeed, most frequently, that he who is a butterfly in some points, is in others a chrysalis, and in some, perhaps, still a grub, all at the same time; that many remain all their lives in the chrysalis state, and many more live and die grubs. They go to church, &c., as if there was a certain magical efficacy in the external forms of religion; they have a blind, instinctive veneration for their governors and others, their superiors; adhere to the established order of things, because it is established, and perform a certain routine of duties, because they have been accustomed

to do so, and have been told that they ought; these are a very useful set of people, as far as they go, and, frequently, act and believe much more wisely than they are themselves aware. The chrysalis, on the contrary, is often a dangerous or useless animal; for under this head come all wanton innovators, infidels, democrats, projectors, &c. Such also are hermits, monks, misanthropes, sentimentalists, and castle-builders. Nothing indeed can be more likely to lead to absurd or mischievous conclusions, than a want of self-distrust, and a disposition to reject, with indiscriminate contempt, whatever has a mixture of error and imperfection, without perceiving, selecting, and retaining the good which is to be found in it; and this is exactly the temper of men in the chrysalis state,—they want CANDOUR.

Children are the to-morrow of society.

If we would but duly take care of children, grown people would generally take care of themselves.

Those who discountenance the education of the poor would do well to consider that it was (so to speak) the great boast of the Author and Finisher of our faith, that "to the poor the Gospel was preached;" so that if His religion be not really calculated for these, His pretensions must have been unfounded. Thus the very truth of His divine mission is at issue on this question.

Any one who says (with Mandeville in his treatise against charity-schools), "If a horse knew as much as a man, I should not like to be his rider," ought to add, "If a man knew as little as a horse, I should not like to trust him to ride."

It is not the knowledge of *something* that does harm, but the ignorance of others. It is not the cultivation of *this* faculty, but the neglect of *that*. In rickety children, it is not that the head, or the trunk, has grown too much, but that the limbs have not kept pace with it.

If any of the mental faculties be overgrown, it is well to amputate it, in order to save the rest. It should be banished by a kind of ostracism, as the best of the Athenian citizens were, for the benefit of the community.

There is a faculty, or, if you will, a quality of the faculties, which well deserves a distinct name; for it is in itself distinct; *i. e.*, is not implied in any other. It is of great practical value, and it forms a striking feature in the character of those who possess it. The word "grasp" has been used to express it; perhaps "Totality" would be the most readily understood. But it ought to have some name generally agreed on. It is the power of taking in the whole of a subject, as a whole; of contemplating many things together in their mutual relations; of referring any individual object presented to the mind, to the system, &c., with which it is connected, just as Cuvier, from a single fragment of a bone can describe the whole animal: it is a power, not merely of collecting and recalling the various parts of a subject, but of so arranging and combining them, as to contemplate a single whole. This talent may be compared to that of a general, in whom, perhaps, the chief point of skill is, not to let his troops fight in detail, but to bear in his mind at once the situation of each separate corps, absent or present, their means of communication and mutual support, and the hostile posts which they may command or be exposed to. There is, perhaps, no faculty so much the gift of nature as Totality

(or eusynopticity?) It may be improved by education; but when it is deficient, all the pains that can be taken will go a less way towards remedying that defect than almost any other. And persons of no education at all, will frequently possess it in a high degree, though, of course, from their limited knowledge and want of cultivation, they have much less opportunity of using and displaying it. It has been remarked by a very acute observer, that sometimes one peasant will be struck with several brilliant passages in a sermon, and, perhaps, be able to repeat them, without having the least notion of the general outline of argument; while another, though he cannot repeat a single sentence, will be able to give a correct account of the drift of the whole discourse. —For it is not, in general, found that this talent is united with a particularly quick perception, and ready recollection of particulars *as* such, — though it will enable its possessors most wonderfully to outdo those of far better individual memory, in the attainment and retention of things which can be formed into a system, and, as it were, tied together into a bunch. In this respect it is like an ear for music, (which indeed in its own way may be called a species thereof,) for I do not know that those who have an ear retain single sounds better than others; but they are enabled to retain a vast number, by means of their mutual relation in a tune. That their remembrance of a tune is not the collective remembrance of the *individual* notes, but of their mutual *relation*, is quite evident from this, that if they begin any tune in a higher or lower note than they heard it, they will go all *through*, the same, and thus bring out notes which, it is conceivable, they never heard in their lives.

This talent is in all points of view immensely important: it constitutes almost the whole excellence of some who are universally allowed to be very superior men; whom ordinary

people would be content to call sensible, able, judicious, clever, &c., without being able to fix upon the very circumstance that constitutes them such, or to point out any one quality in which they much surpass others. This is the talent requisite, above all others, to form a politician, or any one who is concerned in any architectonic study. A person who holds any such leading office as that of a statesman, &c., and has not this talent, will be so far from turning to good account the other talents he may possess, that they will only tend to make him more mischievous; for he will be the better able to accomplish, with skill, the petty and partial schemes, and defend the narrow and short-sighted measures to which he will inevitably be inclined. The more clever a man is, if he is not wise, (wisdom, I think, expresses, or at least implies, that species of totality which is concerned in practice,) the more harm he will do, even though his intentions are good. But if a leading man possesses this talent, he will do very well without a large portion of any other; for there will be found plenty of men capable of conducting the details of business with great skill, though they have not a particle of totality, and are perhaps all the better without it. A good farmer may easily get labourers who can guide a plough or sow turnips better than himself, whereas one who is ever so skilful in these operations may manage the farm very ill.

Those who do not possess this faculty will sometimes admire those who do, without well knowing why: but generally they underrate them, unless they also excel in other points. What is true of some other faculties, (with wit it is, I believe, rather the reverse,) is much more so of this, that no one can estimate it sufficiently but those who possess it themselves; for it is very closely and naturally connected with that candour which puts a fair and full value on each various kind of excellence—on the "diversity of gifts of the

same Spirit;" and those who want it are apt to limit their admiration to excellence in their own province, or, at least, in *some one definite* province, as they are not qualified even to form an adequate conception of this talent. He who feels the want of it, and craves after it, and admires those who are distinguished for it, is not entirely destitute of it. It may be possessed by a man in some particular pursuit, but not generally: it is, perhaps, most common in the mathematical sciences, from the definite, invariable, and demonstrable relation which, in them, one truth bears to another: it is most rare and precious in the affairs of life, from their being of an opposite nature. In these, the faculty assumes a most dignified rank, higher, perhaps, than any other whatever. When very *general*, and possessed in a high degree, it is, I think, necessarily connected with a very exalted tone of piety; the want of it is peculiarly apt to lead men of narrow ingenuity, of confined and partial speculations, into scepticism. In short, Totality forms the very wings of the butterfly; according as they are unexpanded or are wanting, you will remain in the chrysalis state, either for the time, or permanently.

To contemplate any subject in all its relations, and as a part of one great whole, is so far from leading to inaccuracy, that it is the best guard against it. A man of real totality has a microscope, as well as a telescope, always at hand.

The power of duly appreciating *little* things belongs to a great mind: a narrow-minded man has it not, for to him they are *great* things.

To *wander* from a subject, and to take an enlarged view of it, are quite distinct. No two things are more different than a *rambling* and a *comprehensive* mind.

The poet's remedies for the dangers of a little learning, "Drink deep, or taste not," are both of them impossible. None can drink deep enough to be anything more than very superficial; and every human being, that is not a downright idiot, must *taste*.

As it is evident that a man cannot learn all things perfectly, it seems best for a man to make some pursuit his main object, according to, 1st, his *calling*, 2nd, his *natural bent*, or, 3rd, his opportunities; then, let him get a slight knowledge of what else is worth it, regulated in his choice by the same three circumstances; which would, also, determine, in great measure, where an elementary, and where a superficial, knowledge is desirable. Such as are of the most dignified and philosophical nature, are the most proper for elementary study; and such as we are the most likely to be called upon to practise for ourselves, the most proper for superficial: *e. g.*, it would be to most men of no practical use, and, consequently, not worth while, to learn by heart the meaning of some of the Chinese characters; but it might be very well worth while to study the principles on which that most singular language is constructed: *contra;* there is nothing very curious or interesting in the structure of the Portuguese language; but if one was going to travel there, it would be worth while to pick up some words and phrases. If both circumstances conspire, then, both kinds of information are to be sought; viz., something at the beginning and something at the end.

Grammar, logic, rhetoric, and metaphysics, or the philosophy of mind, are manifestly studies of an elementary nature, being concerned about the instruments which we employ in effecting our purposes; and ethics, which is, in fact, a branch

of metaphysics, may be called the elements of conduct. Such knowledge is far from showy: elements do not much come into sight; they are like that part of a bridge which is under water, and is therefore least admired, though it is not the work of least art and difficulty. On this ground it is suitable to females, as least leading to that pedantry which learned ladies must ever be peculiarly liable to, as well as least exciting that jealousy to which they must ever be exposed, while learning in them continues to be a *distinction*. A woman might, in this way, be very learned without any one's finding it out.

Smattering is applied to two opposites: elementary knowledge and *superficial* knowledge; some things should be learned a little at both ends.

To learn a thing because it is easy, is like buying a bargain—purchasing what you do *not* want because you can get it cheaper than what you do want.

Some pursuits are more valuable themselves than the object which is pursued, and which gives them their whole value.

The analytical method is the best to introduce knowledge; the synthetical, to perfect and retain it.

Of many parts of learning, it might be said, "Take care of the easy things, and the hard ones will take care of themselves." The way to make out a difficulty is not to puzzle at it, but to familiarize yourself with those parts which you understand, till they gradually throw light on the more obscure. In learning a language, read easy books with great

care and attention; and such a knowledge will be acquired as may be *applied*, with the greatest advantage, to harder ones: the same rule applies to learning grammar also, *e. g.*, the anomalous verbs should never be learned, until the *chime* of the regular verbs is as familiar as the alphabet.

Old Lily's method is too often neglected, who advises, in his preface to his grammar, not to make a boy go through all his rules in the first place, "but rather let him read some pretie booke," so that the rules may be learnt as he sees the want of them.

Our ancestors (and still more recently the continental nations) were guilty of the absurdity of dressing up children in wigs, swords, huge buckles, hoops, ruffles, and all the elaborate full-dressed finery of grown-up people of that day. It is surely reasonable that the analogous absurdity in greater matters also,—among the rest, in that part of education, the exercises in composition of young students,—should be laid aside, and that we should in all points consider what is appropriate to each different period of life.

The young person who, by the exercise of Debating Societies, is hurried into a habit of fluent elocution—of ready extemporaneous speaking, which consists in *thinking* extempore—will be found to have been qualifying himself only for "the lion's part" in the interlude of Pyramus and Thisbe. "*Snug.* — Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me; for I am slow of study. *Quince.*—You may do it *extempore;* for it is nothing but roaring."

To those engaged in Debating Societies, the temptation is very strong to transgress the rule, which every speaker ought

to observe, of never allowing himself, in one of these mock debates, to maintain anything that he himself believes to be untrue, or to use an argument which he perceives to be fallacious; because, to such persons as usually form the majority in one of those societies, — youths of immature judgment, superficial, and half-educated,—specious falsehood and sophistry will often appear superior to truth and sound reasoning, and will call forth louder plaudits; and the wrong side of a question will often afford room for such a captivating show of ingenuity, as to be to them more easily maintained than the right. And scruples of conscience, relative to veracity and fairness, are not unlikely to be silenced by the consideration that, after all, it is no real battle, but a tournament; there being no real and important measure to be actually decided on, but only a debate carried on for practice' sake.

But, unreal as is the occasion, and insignificant as may be the particular point, a *habit* may be formed which will not easily be unlearnt afterwards—the habit, so debasing to the moral character, of disregarding right reason, and truth, and fair argument.

The defect of mathematics as an exclusive or too predominant study, is, that it has no connection with human affairs, and affords no exercise of *judgment*, having no *degrees* of probability.

The student of any branch of knowledge is liable to seek for a solution of every question on every subject by a reference to his own favourite science; like a school-boy when first intrusted with a knife, who is for trying its edge on everything that comes in his way.

To attempt improving, by increased knowledge, a man who does not know how to make use of what he already has, is like seeking to enlarge the prospect of a short-sighted man by taking him to the top of a hill.

The first business of a teacher, — first, not only in point of time, but of importance,— should be to excite not merely a general curiosity on the subject of study, but a particular curiosity on particular points in that subject.

To teach one who has no curiosity to learn, is to sow a field without ploughing it.

Curiosity is as much the parent of attention, as attention is of memory.

Education, as usually conducted, is addressed to the memory alone; and that is the reason, one reason at least, why clever boys, as they are supposed to be, do not turn out clever men, and *vice versâ*. If a boy remembers all that is told him, he does as much as is usually required of him; and no wonder, for he is *told* just everything, and is never called upon to exert his own powers except in retaining; and then it is made a wonder that a person who has been so well taught, and who, perhaps, was quick in learning and remembering, should not prove an able man: which is about as reasonable as to expect that a capacious cistern, if filled, should be converted into a perennial fountain.

Many are saved by the deficiency of their memory from being spoiled by their education.

Among the intellectual qualifications for the study of History, the importance of a vivid imagination is greatly, if not

wholly, overlooked. Most persons have been accustomed to consider Imagination as having no other office than to feign and falsify; and therefore, that it must tend to pervert the truth of History and to mislead the judgment.—On the contrary, our view of any transaction, especially one that is remote in time or place, will necessarily be imperfect, generally incorrect, unless it embrace something more than the bare outline of the occurrences,—unless we have before the mind a lively idea of the scenes in which the events took place, the habits of thought and of feeling of the actors, and all the circumstances connected with the transaction; unless, in short, we can in a considerable degree transport ourselves out of our own age, and country, and persons, and imagine ourselves the agents or spectators. It is from consideration of all these circumstances that we are enabled to form a right judgment as to the facts which History records, and to derive instruction from it. What we imagine may indeed be merely *imaginary*, that is, unreal; but it may again be what actually does or did exist. To say that Imagination, if not regulated by sound judgment and sufficient knowledge, may chance to convey to us false impressions of past events, is only to say that man is fallible. But such false impressions are even *much the more* likely to take possession of those whose imagination is feeble or uncultivated. They are apt to imagine the things, persons, times, countries, &c., which they read of, as much less different from what they see around them, than is really the case.

It is worthy of remark, in reference to that kind of Probability — the "Plausible" or "Natural," — that men are apt to judge amiss of situations, persons, and circumstances, concerning which they have no exact knowledge, by applying to these the measure of their own feelings and experience:

the result of which is, that a correct account of these will often appear to them unnatural, and an erroneous one natural: *e. g.*, a person born with the usual endowments of the senses is apt to attribute to the blind-born and the deaf-mutes, such habits of thought, and such a state of mind, as his own would be, if he were to *become* deaf or blind, or to be left in the dark: which would be very wide of the truth. That a man born blind would not, on obtaining sight, know apart, on seeing them, a ball and a cube, which he had been accustomed to handle, nor distinguish the dog from the cat, would appear to most persons unacquainted with the result of experiments much less "natural" than the reverse. So it is also with those brought up free, in reference to the feelings and habits of thought of born slaves; with civilized men in reference to savages; and of men living in society, in reference to one who passes whole years in total solitude. I have no doubt that the admirable fiction of Robinson Crusoe would have been not only much less amusing, but to most readers less apparently *natural*, if Friday and the other savages had been represented with the indocility and other qualities which really belong to such beings as the Brazilian cannibals, and if the hero himself had been represented with that half-brutish, apathetic despondency and carelessness about all comforts demanding steady exertion, which are the really natural results of a life of utter solitude, and if he had been described as almost losing the use of his own language instead of remembering the Spanish.

Again, I remember mentioning to a very intelligent man the description given by the earliest missionaries to New Zealand, of their introduction of the culture of wheat; which he derided as an absurd fabrication, but which appeared to me what might have been reasonably conjectured. The savages were familiar with bread in the form of ship-biscuit;

and accordingly, *roots* being alone cultivated by them, and furnishing their chief food, they expected to find at the roots of the wheat tubers, which could be made into biscuits. They accordingly dug up the wheat, and were mortified at the failure of their hopes. The idea of collecting small seeds, pulverizing these, and making the powder into a paste which was to be hardened by fire, was quite foreign from all their experience. Yet here an unnatural representation would to many have appeared the more natural.

Much pains, therefore, must in many cases be taken in giving such explanations as may put men on their guard against this kind of mistake, and enable them to see the improbability, and sometimes utter impossibility, of what, at the first glance, they will be apt to regard as perfectly natural, and to satisfy them that something which they were disposed to regard as extravagantly unnatural is just what might have been reasonably expected.

In works of fiction there is a distinction to be made between the *unnatural* and the merely *improbable.* A fiction is unnatural when there is some assignable reason against the events taking place as described,—when men are represented as acting contrary to the character assigned them, or to human nature in general; as when a young lady of seventeen, brought up in ease, luxury and retirement, with no companions but the narrow-minded and illiterate, displays (as a heroine usually does) under the most trying circumstances, such wisdom, fortitude, and knowledge of the world, as the best instructors and the best examples can rarely produce, without the aid of more mature age and longer experience.—Indeed, one way in which the unnatural is often made to appear, for a time, natural, is by giving a lively and striking description which is correct in its several parts, and

unnatural only when these are combined into a *whole;* like a painter who should give an exact picture of an English country-house, of a grove of palm-trees, an elephant, and an iceberg, all in the same landscape. Thus, a vivid representation of a den of infamy and degradation, and of an ingenious and well-disposed youth, may each be, in itself, so natural as to draw off for a time the attention from the absurdity of making the one arise out of the other. — But a fiction is still *improbable*, though not *unnatural*, when there is no reason to be assigned why things should not take place as represented, except that the *overbalance of chances* is against it; the hero meets, in his utmost distress, most opportunely with the very person to whom he had formerly done a signal service, and who happens to communicate to him a piece of intelligence which sets all to rights. Why should he not meet him as well as any one else? All that can be said is, that there is no reason why he should: This distinction may be plainly perceived in the events of real life; when anything takes place of such a nature as we should call in a fiction merely improbable, because there are many chances against it, we call it a lucky or unlucky accident, a singular coincidence, something very extraordinary, odd, curious, &c., whereas anything which, in a fiction, would be called unnatural when it actually occurs (and such things do occur), is still called unnatural, inexplicable, unaccountable, inconceivable, &c., epithets which are not applied to events that have merely the balances of chances against them.

A novel or tale may be compared to a picture; a fable to a device.

Poetry is imitative of prose, in the same manner as singing of ordinary speaking, and dancing of ordinary action.

Considering that Proverbs have been current in all ages and countries, it is a curious circumstance that so much difference of opinion should exist as to the utility, and as to the design of them. Some are accustomed to speak as if Proverbs contained a sort of concentrated essence of the wisdom of all ages, which will enable any one to judge and act aright on every emergency. But that Proverbs are not generally regarded, by those who use them, as necessarily propositions of universal and acknowledged truth, like mathematical axioms, is plain from the circumstance that many of those most in use, are, like the common-places of Bacon, opposed to each other; as, *e. g.*, "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves;" to "Be not penny-wise and pound-foolish;" and again, "The more haste, the worse speed;" or, "Wait awhile, that we may make an end the sooner;" to "Take time by the forelock," or, "Time and tide for no man bide," &c.

It seems, I think, to be practically understood, that a Proverb is merely a *compendious expression* of some principle which will usually be, in different cases, and with or without certain modifications, true or false, applicable or inapplicable. When then a Proverb is introduced, the speaker usually employs it as a *major-premise*, and is understood to imply, as a *minor*, that the principle thus referred to is *applicable* in the existing case. And what is gained by the employment of the Proverb, is, that his judgment and his reasons for it are conveyed, through the use of a *well-known* form of expression, clearly, and at the same time in an incomparably *shorter space*, than if he had had to explain his meaning in expressions framed for the occasion. And the brevity thus obtained is often still further increased by suppressing the full statement even of the very proverb

itself, if a very common one, and merely *alluding* to it in a word or two.

Proverbs, accordingly, are somewhat analogous to those medical formulas, which, being in frequent use, are kept ready made up in the chemist's shops, and which often save the framing of a distinct prescription.

Cultivate not only the corn-fields of your mind, but the pleasure-grounds also.

Every faculty and every study, however worthless they may be, when not employed in the service of God—however debased and polluted, when devoted to the service of sin—become ennobled and sanctified when directed, by one whose constraining motive is the love of Christ, towards a good object. Let not the Christian then think "scorn of the pleasant land:"—that land is the field of ancient and modern literature—of philosophy, in almost all its departments—of the arts of reasoning and persuasion.—Every part of it may be cultivated with advantage, as the land of Canaan when bestowed upon God's peculiar people. They were not commanded to let it lie waste, as incurably polluted by the abominations of its first inhabitants; but to cultivate it, and dwell in it, living in obedience to the divine laws, and dedicating its choicest fruits to the Lord their God.

It is a great mistake, often made in practice, if not in theory, to suppose that a child's character, intellectual and moral, is formed by those books only which we put into his hands with that *design*. As hardly anything can accidentally touch the soft clay without stamping its mark on it, so hardly any reading can interest a child, without contributing in some degree, though the book itself be afterwards totally

forgotten, to form the character; and the parents, therefore, who, merely requiring from him a certain course of *study*, pay little or no attention to story-books, are educating him they know not how.

Those works of fiction are worse than unprofitable that inculcate morality, with an exclusion of all reference to religious principle. This is obviously and notoriously the character of Miss Edgeworth's moral tales. And so entire and resolute is this exclusion, that it is maintained at the expense of what may be called poetical truth: it destroys, in many instances, the probability of the tale, and the naturalness of the characters. That Christianity *does* exist, every one must believe as an incontrovertible truth; nor can any one deny that, whether true or false, it does exercise, at least is supposed to exercise, an influence on the feelings and conduct of some of the believers in it. To represent, therefore, persons of various ages, sex, country, and station in life, as practising, on the most trying occasions, every kind of duty, and encountering every kind of danger, difficulty and hardship, while none of them ever makes the least reference to a religious motive, is as decidedly at variance with reality —what is called in works of fiction *unnatural*—as it would be to represent Mahomet's enthusiastic followers as rushing into battle without any thought of his promised paradise. This, therefore, is a blemish in point of art which every reader, possessing taste, must perceive, whatever may be his religious or non-religious persuasion. But a far higher, and more important, question than that of taste is involved. For though Miss Edgeworth may entertain opinions which would not permit her, with consistency, to attribute more to the influence of religion than she has done; and in that case may stand acquitted, *in foro conscientiæ*, of wilfully suppress-

ing anything which she acknowledges to be true and important; yet, as a writer, it must still be considered as a great blemish, in the eyes at least of those who think differently, that virtue should be studiously inculcated, with scarcely any reference to what they regard as the mainspring of it — that vice should be traced to every other source except the want of religious principle—that the most radical change from worthlessness to excellence should be represented as wholly independent of that Agent, which they consider as the only one that can accomplish it — and that consolation under affliction should be represented as derived from every source, except the one which they look to as the only true and sure one :—"Is it not because there is no God in Israel, that ye have sent to enquire of Baalzebub, the God of Ekron?" This vital defect in such works should be constantly pointed out to the young reader; and he should be warned that, to realize the picture of noble, disinterested, thorough-going virtue, presented in such and such an instance, it is absolutely necessary to resort to those principles which, in these fictions, are unnoticed. He should, in short, be reminded that all these "things that are lovely and of good report," which have been placed before him, are the genuine fruits of the Holy Land; though the spies who have brought them bring also an evil report of that land, and would persuade us to remain wandering in the wilderness.

In books designed for children, there are two extremes that should be avoided. The one, that reference to religious principles in connection with matters too trifling and undignified, arising from a well-intentioned zeal, causing a forgetfulness of the maxim, whose notorious truth has made it proverbial, "Too much familiarity breeds contempt;" and the other is the contrary, and still more prevailing, extreme,

arising from the desire to preserve a due *reverence* for religion, at the expense of its useful application in conduct. But a line may be drawn which will keep clear of both extremes. We should not exclude the association of things sacred with whatever are to *ourselves* trifling matters, (for "these little things are great" to children,) but, with whatever is viewed by *them* as trifling. Every thing is great or small in reference to the parties concerned. The private concerns of any obscure individual are very insignificant to the world at large; but they are of great importance to himself. And all worldly affairs must be small in the sight of the Most High; but irreverent familiarity is engendered in the mind of any one, then, and then only, when things sacred are associated with such as are, to *him*, insignificant trifles.

Any *direct* attempt at moral teaching, in a fictitious narrative, and any attempt whatever to give scientific information will, unless managed with the utmost discretion, interfere with what, after all, is the immediate object of the writer of fiction, as of the poet, *to please*. If instruction do not join as a volunteer, she will do no good service. Some tales put one in mind of those clocks and watches which are condemned "a double or a treble debt to pay;" which, besides their legitimate object, to show the hour, tell you the day of the month or the week, give you a landscape for a dial plate, with the second-hand forming the sails of a windmill, or have a barrel to play a tune, or an alarum to remind you of an engagement; all very good things in their way: but so it is, that these watches never tell the time so well as those, in which that is the exclusive object of the maker. Every additional movement is an obstacle to the original design.

I doubt whether Shakspeare ever had any thought at all of making his personages speak characteristically. In most instances, I conceive — probably in all — he drew characters correctly, because he *could not avoid it;* and would never have attained, in that department, such excellence as he has, if he had made any studied efforts for it. And the same probably may be said of Homer, and of those other writers who have excelled the most in delineating characters. Shakspeare's peculiar genius consisted chiefly, I conceive, in his forming the same distinct and consistent idea of an imaginary person, that an ordinary man forms of a real and well-known individual. We usually conjecture, pretty accurately, concerning a very intimate acquaintance, how he would speak or act on any supposed occasion; if any one should report to us his having done or said something quite out of character, we should at once be struck with the inconsistency, and we often represent to ourselves, and describe to others, without any conscious effort, not only the substance of what he would have been likely to say, but even his characteristic phrases and looks. Shakspeare *could* no more have endured an expression from the lips of Macbeth, inconsistent with the character originally conceived, than an ordinary man could attribute to his most respectable acquaintance the behaviour of a ruffian, or to a human being, the voice of a bird, or to a European, the features and hue of a negro. Merely from the vividness of the original conception, characteristic conduct and language spontaneously suggested themselves to the great dramatist's pen. He called his personages into being, and left them, as it were, to speak and act for themselves.

It is no fool that can describe fools well. To invent indeed a conversation full of wisdom or of wit, requires that

the writer should himself possess ability: but the converse does not hold good. Many who have succeeded pretty well in painting superior characters, have failed in giving individuality to those weaker ones, which it is necessary to introduce in order to give a faithful representation of real life: they exhibit to us mere folly in the abstract, forgetting that to the eye of a skilful naturalist, the insects on a leaf present as wide differences as exist between the elephant and the lion. Slender, and Shallow, and Aguecheek, as Shakspeare has painted them, though equally fools, resemble one another no more than Richard, and Macbeth, and Julius Cæsar.

Biography is allowed on all hands, to be one of the most attractive and profitable kinds of reading: now novels of the highest class being a kind of fictitious biography, bear the same relation to the real, that epic and tragic poetry, according to Aristotle, bear to history; they present us (supposing of course, each perfect in its kind) with the general, instead of the particular,—the probable, instead of the true; and, by leaving out those accidental irregularities, and exceptions to general rules, which constitute the many improbabilities of real narrative, present us with a clear and *abstracted* view of the general rules themselves; and thus concentrate, as it were, into a small compass, the net result of wide experience.

Geologists complain that when they want specimens of the *common* rocks of a country, they receive curious spars; just so, historians give us the *extraordinary* events, and omit just what we want — the every-day life of each particular time and country.

He who knows two languages is a higher being than he who knows but one; and the more dissimilar the better.

One great advantage in studying philosophical works in a foreign language, is that an idea which one has to comprehend, or express, in a foreign language, is more distinctly understood by the mind, and the errors arising from the ambiguity, and other defects of language, more easily detected. — Many a voluminous treatise, the Author would throw into the fire, if he could but be persuaded to translate it into Greek. Besides this prevention of the errors arising from the ambiguity of language, the very difficulty excites the attention so as to fix the thoughts better in the memory; meat that requires a good deal of chewing, is sometimes more digestible and nutritive, than spoon-meat that is swallowed whole.

In the Portuguese language there are two words, "ser" and "estar," both answering to the English "to be;" and foreigners are often much perplexed about the proper use of each. The rule, however, is a logical one, easily remembered: "estar" furnishes the copula when the predicate is a *separable accident*, and "ser," in *all other* cases. For instance, "Estar in Inghilteria" is "to be in England;" Ser Inglez is "to be a native of England." Of these two examples, the former is what logicians call a *separable* accident, because it may be separated from the *individual:* (*e. g.*, he may leave England;) the latter is an *inseparable* accident, being not separable from the individual, (*i. e.*, he who is a native of England can never be otherwise.) So also "Quem *e?*" "who is he?" "Quem *esta* la?" "who is there?"

Learning a language from its poets is like studying Botany in a garden of double flowers.

The chief use of the Classics is, that they afford a fixed standard of taste by which we may regulate our judgment,

and this without servilely adhering to the ancient models. — We need not steer direct for the fixed point, but by always observing our bearing to it, many eccentricities of our course will be prevented. Besides this, the study of them affords the same advantage, that the acquirement of a foreign language presents, for observing the various modes of thinking in different nations, at different times.

Language often contains monuments, not noticed till carefully examined, of ancient laws, usages, and modes of thought, so old and forgotten, that the revival of them would be regarded as an innovation. The word "edification" is such a monument. There are many such of heathen superstitions, *e.g.*, Bacchanalian, Martials, Panic, Jovial, Hearth (from a Saxon Goddess, Hertha,) and the names of the days of the week. In England people talk of being afraid of "Tom Poker." This is Puck, or Pug, or Pooka; or Bug, or Bogle, or Bugaboo; in Russ Bog, which, being the word for a spirit, is applied to the Deity.

The laws of rude nations, in ancient times, decreed, that the *next of kin* to the person murdered should have satisfaction, either by the death of the murderer, or by accepting (if he chose) a payment instead, just as if it had been his horse or ox that had been killed. Accordingly, the word "mercy" comes from the Latin "merces," a payment; and originally a man was not said to *show* or to *bestow* mercy, but to *accept* mercy; that is, consent to spare another's life on receiving a ransom.

The word "punishment" again, is derived from a word which, in Greek and in Latin, signified the payment of a *ransom*, *compensation*, or *satisfaction*. And in those languages they did not speak of *inflicting* and *suffering* punish-

ment, but of *taking* vengeance, and *paying* the penalty (*or damages*) which was done, either in money, (as is the law now,) or by submitting to blows or other personal chastisement, to gratify the desire of the sufferer for *retaliation*, (from the Latin "talis," like.) Hence also the Greek word, καταλλαττω which originally signified to "exchange," came to signify to "reconcile;" since it was, usually, by giving and accepting a compensation, or equivalent for an injury, that parties were reconciled.

It will be often found that two of the meanings of a word will have no connexion with one another, but will each have some connexion with the third. Thus "martyr" originally signified a witness; thence it was applied to those who *suffered* in bearing testimony to Christianity; and thence again it is often applied to sufferers in general: the first and third significations are not the least connected. Thus "Past" signifies originally a pillar (postum from pono); then, a distance marked out by posts; and then, the carriages, messengers, &c., that travelled over this distance.

In that phenomenon in language, that both in the Greek and Latin, nouns of the neuter gender, *denoting things*, invariably had the *nominative* and the *accusative* the same, or rather, had an accusative only, employed as a nominative when required; may there not be traced an indistinct consciousness of the persuasion that a mere *thing* is not capable of being an agent, which a *person* only can really be, and that the possession of power, strictly so called, by physical causes is not conceivable, or their capacity to maintain, any more than to produce at first, the system of the Universe? —whose continued existence, as well as its origin, seems to depend on the continued operation of the great Creator.—

May there not be in this an admission that the Laws of Nature presuppose an agent, and are incapable of being the cause of their own observance?

The heathen mythology contains among a chaos of wild fables, some broken and scattered fragments of true history, like the organic remains of an ancient world, found dispersed and often hard to be ascertained, in the midst of the strata formed from the deposits of a deluge. Such a fragment of truth is in the tradition respecting the discovery of fire by Prometheus, *i. e.*, the Provident,—fire being probably no human discovery, but a gift of *Providence* in the way of a revelation. Again—Phœnix was the name given to an imaginary bird, which was fabled to live a thousand years, and then to take fire and burn to ashes, from which a new Phœnix arose. Now, as the Greek name for a palm was also phœnix, and as it is generally supposed that it was in a dwarf palm (one of the commonest shrubs in the wilderness of Sinai) that Moses saw the manifestation of God, in a flame of fire, may not the fable of the bird have arisen from some obscure tradition of the *palm* bush, which "burned with fire and yet was not consumed?" It is remarkable, that in the eastern countries (more lately in Spain and Italy also) palm-branches have long been used on occasions of triumph or rejoicing, being reckoned an emblem of victory.

It has always happened that, when public attention has been first directed to any new branch of knowledge, the result has been something like the exuberant fecundity which Lucretius attributes to the earth at its first formation — a confused assemblage of mis-shapen monsters, interspersed with a few more perfectly formed beings, whose superior organization enables them to survive the spontaneous destruc-

tion of the rest. And when this mixture of truth and falsehood, of sound and unsound theories, is presented to the world, it has ever been found that the timorous, the lazy, and the undistinguishing (no inconsiderable portion of mankind), have denied the whole indiscriminately, as a tissue of mischievous absurdities.

In combating deep-rooted prejudices, and maintaining unpopular and paradoxical truths, the point to be aimed at should be, to adduce what is sufficient, and *not much more* than is sufficient, to prove your conclusion. If you can but satisfy men that your opinion is decidedly more probable than the opposite, you will have carried your point more effectually than if you go on, much beyond this, to demonstrate, by a multitude of the most forcible arguments, the extreme absurdity of thinking differently, till you have affronted the self-esteem of some, and awakened the distrust of others. Some will be stung by a feeling of shame passing off into resentment, which stops their ears against argument. They would be so *sorry to think* they had been blinded to such an excess, and are so angry with him who is endeavouring to persuade them to think so, that these feelings determine them *not* to think it. They try (and it is an attempt which few persons ever make in vain) to shut their eyes against an humiliating conviction: and thus, the very triumphant force of the reasoning adduced, serves to harden them against admitting the conclusion: much as one may conceive Roman soldiers desperately holding out an untenable fortress to the last extremity, from apprehension of being made to pass *under the yoke* by the victors, should they surrender. Others, again, perhaps comparatively strangers to the question and not prejudiced against the conclusion set forth too strongly, will sometimes have their suspicions roused by this very circum-

stance. "Can it be possible," they will say, "that such a conclusion, so very obvious as this is made to appear, should not have been admitted long ago? Is it conceivable that such and such eminent philosophers, divines, statesmen, &c., should have been all their lives under delusions so gross?" Hence, they are apt to infer, either that the author has mistaken the opinions of those he imagines opposed to him; or else, that there is some subtle fallacy in his arguments. A distrust that reminds one of the story related by a French writer, M. Say, of some one who, for a wager, stood a whole day on one of the bridges in Paris, offering to sell a five-franc piece for one franc, and (naturally) not finding a purchaser. In this way, the very clearness and force of the demonstration will, with some minds, have an opposite tendency to the one desired. Labourers who are employed in *driving wedges* into a block of wood, are careful to use blows of no greater force than is just sufficient. If they strike too hard, the elasticity of the wood will *throw out the wedge.*

The difficulty of refuting very silly and weak arguments, reminds one of the well-known difficult feat of cutting through a cushion with a sword.

Eloquence is relative. One can no more pronounce on the eloquence of any composition than the wholesomeness of a medicine, without knowing for whom it is intended.

It is usual to call an argument, simply, strong or weak, without reference to the purpose for which it is designed; whereas, the arguments which afford the most *satisfaction* to a candid mind, are often such as would have less weight in *controversy* than many others, which, again, would be the less suitable for the former purpose,—for instance, there are

some of the internal evidences of Christianity, which, in general, are the most satisfactory to a believer's mind, but are not the most striking in the refutation of unbelievers: the arguments from Analogy on the other hand, which are (in refuting objections) the most *unanswerable*, are not so pleasing and consolatory.

It may serve to illustrate what has been said, to remark that our judgment of the character of any individual, is often not originally derived from such circumstances as we should assign, or *could* adequately set forth in language, in justification of our opinion. When we undertake to give our reasons for thinking that some individual, with whom we are personally acquainted, is, or is not, a gentleman,—a man of taste, — humane,—public-spirited, &c.,—we of course appeal to his conduct, or his distinct avowal of his own sentiments; and if these furnish sufficient proof of our assertions, we are admitted to have given good reasons for our opinion; but it may be still doubted whether these were, in the first instance, at least, *our* reasons which led us to form that opinion. If we carefully and candidly examine our own minds, we shall generally find that our judgment was originally, (if not absolutely decided), at least, strongly influenced by the person's looks, tones of voice, gestures, choice of expressions, and the like; which, if stated as reasons for forming a conclusion, would in general appear frivolous, merely because no language is competent adequately to describe them; but which are not necessarily insufficient grounds for beginning, at least, to form an opinion; since it is notorious that there are many acute persons who are seldom deceived in such indications of character.

In all subjects, indeed, persons unaccustomed to writing or discussion, but possessing natural sagacity, and experience in particular departments, have been observed to be

generally unable to give a satisfactory reason for their judgments, even on points on which they are actually very good judges. This is a defect which it is the business of education to surmount or diminish. After all, however, in some subjects no language can adequately convey (to the inexperienced at least) all the indications which influence the judgment of an acute and practised observer. And hence it has been justly and happily remarked, that "he must be an indifferent physician, who never takes any step for which he cannot assign a satisfactory reason."

To speak perfectly well, a man must feel that he has got to the *bottom* of the subject; and to feel this on occasions when, from the nature of the case, it is impossible he really can have done so, is inconsistent with the character of great profundity. Therefore, it may fairly be doubted, whether a first-rate man can ever be a first-rate orator, if at least he is to be accounted such, who (as Cicero lays down) can speak the best and most persuasively on any subject whatever that may arise.

That kind of skill by which, in oral examination of witnesses, a cross-examiner succeeds in alarming, misleading, or bewildering an honest witness, may be characterized as the most, or one of the most, base and depraved of all possible employments of intellectual power. Nor is it by any means the best mode of eliciting truth. Generally speaking, a quiet, gentle, and straightforward, though full and careful, examination, will be the most adapted to elicit truth; and the manœuvres, and the brow-beating, which are the most adapted to confuse an honest, simple-minded, witness, are just what the dishonest one is the best prepared for. The more the storm blusters, the more carefully he wraps round

him the cloak, which a warm sunshine will often induce him to throw off.

It is no uncommon manœuvre of a dexterous sophist, when there is some argument, statement, scheme, &c., which he cannot directly defeat, to assent with seeming cordiality, but with some exception, addition, or qualification, (as *e. g.*, an additional clause in an act), which, though seemingly unimportant, shall entirely nullify all the rest. This has been humorously compared to the trick of the pilgrim, in the well-known tale, who "took the liberty to boil his peas."

It is not only the fairest, but also the wisest, plan for an advocate to *state objections* in their full force. It is but a momentary and ineffective triumph that can be obtained by manœuvres like those of Turnus's charioteer, who furiously chased the feeble stragglers of the army, and evaded the main front of the battle.

Gibbon affords the most remarkable instances of that kind of style, in which the assumption of the point in question is never stated distinctly, but some other proposition inserted which implies it. He keeps it out of sight (as a dexterous thief does stolen goods), at the very moment he is taking it for granted. His way of writing reminds one of those persons who never dare look you full in the face.

That style which is composed chiefly of the words of French origin, while it is less intelligible to the lowest classes, is characteristic of those who, in cultivation of taste, are below the highest. As in dress, furniture, deportment, &c., so also in language, the dread of vulgarity, constantly besetting those who are half conscious that they are in

danger of it, drives them into the opposite extreme of affected finery.

Words derived from the Saxon are better understood by the lower orders of the English than those derived from the Latin (either directly or through the medium of the French), even when the latter are more in use among persons of education. A remarkable instance of this is, that while the children of the higher classes always call their parents "Papa!" and "Mamma!" the children of the peasantry usually call them by the titles of "Father!" and "Mother!" For those who wish to be understood by them, there is a remarkable scope for such a choice, from the multitude of synonymes derived respectively from the two elements of which our language is composed. The compilers of our Liturgy, being anxious to reach the understanding of all classes, at a time when our language was in a less settled state than at present, availed themselves of this circumstance, in employing many synonymous or nearly synonymous expressions, most of which are of the description just alluded to. Take, as an instance, the Exhortation: "acknowledge" and "confess," —"dissemble" and "cloak," —"humble," and "lowly,"— "goodness" and "mercy,"—"assemble" and "meet together.

Young writers of genius ought especially to be admonished to ask themselves frequently, not whether this or that is a *striking expression*, but whether it makes the *meaning* more striking than another phrase would.

Unpractised composers are apt to fancy that they shall have the greater abundance of matter, the wider extent of subject they comprehend; but experience shows that the reverse is the fact: the more general and extensive view will

often suggest nothing to the mind but vague and trite remarks; when, upon narrowing the field of discussion, many interesting questions of detail present themselves. The applying a microscope to a small space, will give to view much that a wider survey would not have exhibited.

Many writers have diminished the effect of their works by being scrupulous to admit nothing into them which had not some absolute, intrinsic, and independent merit. They have acted like those who strip off the leaves of a fruit-tree, as being of themselves good for nothing, with the view of securing more nourishment to the fruit, which in fact cannot attain its full maturity and flavour without them. Let any one cut out from the *Iliad*, or from Shakspeare's plays, everything to which the only objection is, its being devoid of importance or of interest *in itself;* and he will find that what is left will have lost more than half its charms.

To attempt to make everything emphatic is to make nothing emphatic.

To brighten the dark parts of a picture produces much the same result as if one had darkened the bright parts; in either case there is a want of *relief* and *contrast;* and Composition, as well as Painting, has its lights and shades, which must be distributed with no less skill, if we would produce the desired effect.

The appearance of a too *uniform* elegance or stateliness of style, is apt to clog; like a piece of music without any discord.

The word 'frigid' has been properly applied to that style, in which ornaments that might seem to border on the poetical,

are adopted in prose, because we are, in poetical prose, *reminded* of, and for that reason, disposed *to miss*, the "warmth" and "glow" of poetry. It is on the same principle, that we are disposed to speak of *coldness* in the rays of the *moon*, because they *remind* us of sunshine but want its warmth; and that (to use an humble and more familiar instance) an empty fire-place is apt to suggest an idea of cold.

Johnson's style, unfortunately, is particularly easy of imitation, even by writers utterly destitute of his vigour of thought; and such imitators are intolerable. They bear the same resemblance to their model, that the armour of the Chinese, as described by travellers, consisting of thick quilted cotton covered with stiff glazed paper, does to that of the ancient knights; equally glittering and bulky, but destitute of the temper and firmness which was its sole advantage.

Some writers abound with a kind of mock-antithesis, in which the same, or nearly the same, sentiment which is expressed by the first clause, is repeated in a second; or at least, in which there is but little of real contrast between the clauses which are expressed in a contrasted form; and which have been compared to the false handles and keyholes with which furniture is decorated, that serve no other purpose than to *correspond to the real ones*. Much of Dr. Johnson's writings is chargeable with this fault.

Energetic brevity is best attained by what may be called a *suggestive* style; such, that is, as without making a distinct, though brief, mention of a multitude of particulars, shall put the hearer's mind into the same *train of thought* as the speaker's, and suggest to him more than is actually expressed. Such a style may be compared to a good map, which marks distinctly the great outlines, setting down the principal rivers,

towns, mountains, &c., leaving the imagination to supply the villages, hillocks, and streamlets; which, if they were all inserted in their due proportions, would crowd the map, though, after all, they could not be discerned without a microscope.

As a *side* view of a faint star, or, especially, of a comet, presents it in much greater brilliancy than a direct view; so by an oblique description, by the introducing circumstances connected with, and affected by, the main object, but not absolutely forming part of it, a more striking impression shall be produced of anything that is in itself great and remarkable, than could be produced by a minute and direct description. Thus, the woman's application to the king of Samaria, to compel her neighbour to fulfil the agreement of sharing with her the infant's flesh, gives a more frightful impression of the horrors of the famine than any more direct description could have done; since it presents to us the picture of that hardening of the heart to every kind of horror, and that destruction of the ordinary state of human sentiment, which is the result of long continued and extreme misery. Nor could any detail of the particular vexations to be suffered by the exiled Jews for their disobedience, convey so lively an idea of them as that description of their *result* contained in the denunciation of Moses: "In the evening thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! and in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were evening!"

In the poem of Rokeby, a striking exemplification occurs of what has been said: Bertram, in describing the prowess he had displayed as a Buccaneer, does not particularise any of his exploits, but alludes to the terrible *impression* they had left;

"Panama's maids shall long look pale,
When Risingham inspires the tale;
Chili's dark matrons long shall tame
The *froward child* with Bertram's name."

The first of dramatists, who might have been perhaps the first of orators, has offered some excellent exemplifications of this rule; especially in the speech of Antony over Cæsar's body.

It is a fault, carefully to be avoided, to express feeling more vehemently than that the audience can go along with the speaker; who would, in that case, as Cicero observes, seem like one raving among the sane, or intoxicated in the midst of the sober. And accordingly, except where from extraneous causes, the audience are already in an excited state, we must carry them forward gradually, and allow time for the fire to kindle. The blast which would brighten a strong flame would, if applied too soon, extinguish the first faint spark.

Almost every one is aware of the infectious nature of any emotion excited in a large assembly. The power of this reflex sympathy in increasing any feeling — whether pity, indignation, contempt, bashfulness, the sense of the ludicrous, &c.—may be compared to the increase of sound by a number of echoes; or of light, by a number of mirrors; or to the blaze of a heap of firebrands, each of which would speedily have gone out if kindled separately, but which when thrown together, help to kindle each other.

Action, in public speaking, should always *precede* somewhat the utterance of the words. That is always the natural order of action. An emotion, struggling for utterance, pro-

duces a tendency to a bodily gesture, to express that emotion more *quickly* than words can be framed; the words follow as soon as they can be spoken. And this being always the case with a real, earnest, unstudied speaker, this mode of placing the action foremost, gives (if it be otherwise appropriate), the appearance of earnest emotion actually present in the mind. And yet, boys are generally taught to employ the prescribed action either *after*, or *during*, the utterance of the words it is to enforce. This circumstance alone would be sufficient to convert the action of Demosthenes himself into a feeble affectation, into unsuccessful and ridiculous pantomime.

He is usually regarded as a *powerful* speaker, who is proclaimed as such by *all* his hearers, in consequence of their having all admitted, or being ready to admit, his conclusion, and thence, affording, at least, no *proof* of his power.

It is worth observing that Arguments from Example, whether real or invented, are the most easily comprehended by the young and the uneducated; because they facilitate the power of abstraction—a power which, in such hearers, is usually the most imperfect. This mode of reasoning corresponds to a *geometrical* demonstration by means of a diagram; in which the figure placed before the learner, is an *individual*, employed, as he soon comes to perceive, as a *sign*, though not an *arbitrary* sign, representing the whole class. The words, written or spoken, of any language are arbitrary: the characters of picture-writing, or hieroglyphics, are *natural* signs. The *algebraic* signs, again, are arbitrary; each character not being itself an individual of the class it represents. These last therefore correspond to the *abstract* terms of a language.

The pleasure derived from taking in the author's meaning, when an ingenious comparison is employed, (referred by Aristotle to the pleasure of the act of learning), is so great, that the reader or hearer is apt to mistake his apprehension of *this* for a perception of a just and convincing analogy. The aptness and beauty of an illustration sometimes leads men to overrate, and sometimes to underrate, its force as an argument.

Our Lord's parables are mostly explanatory — introduced for Illustration, not for Argument. His discourses, generally speaking, are but little argumentative. "He taught as one having authority;" stating and explaining his doctrines, and referring for *proof* to his *actions*." "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me."

The non-existence of a case brought forward as an illustration of our meaning, no more affects the soundness of our argument than the mistake of a physician, as to the disorder of a patient, affects the fact that such a disorder exists.

I can well sympathize with the contempt mingled with indignation expressed by Cicero against certain philosophers, who found fault with Plato for having, in a case he proposes, alluded to the fabulous ring of Gyges, which had the virtue of making the wearer invisible. They had found out, it seems, that there *never was* any such ring.

The Arrangement of Arguments is not perhaps of less consequence in Composition than in the Military Art; in which it is well known, that with an equality of forces, in numbers, courage, and every other point, the manner in which they are drawn up, so as either to afford mutual sup-

port, or on the other hand, even to impede and annoy each other, may make the difference of victory or defeat.

E. G. In the statement of the Evidences of our Religion, so as to give them their just weight, much depends on the Order in which they are placed. The Antecedent probability that a Revelation should be given to Man, and that it should be established by miracles, all would allow to be, considered by itself, in the absence of strong, direct testimony, utterly insufficient to establish the conclusion. On the other hand, miracles considered abstractedly, as represented to have occurred, without any occasion or reason for them being assigned, carry with them such a strong, intrinsic improbability as could not be wholly surmounted even by such evidence as would fully establish any other matters of fact. But the evidences of the former class, however inefficient alone towards the establishment of the conclusion, have very great weight in preparing the mind for receiving the other arguments; which again, though they would be listened to with prejudice if not so supported, will then be allowed their just weight. The writers in defence of Christianity have not always attended to this principle; and their opponents have often availed themselves of the knowledge of it, by combating in detail, arguments, the combined force of which would have been irresistible. If any one out of a hundred men throw a stone which strikes a certain object, there is but a slight probability, from that fact alone, that he aimed at that object; but if all the hundred threw stones which struck the *same* object, no one would doubt that they aimed at it. It is from such a combination of argument that we infer the existence of an intelligent Creator, from the marks of contrivance visible in the universe, though many of these are such as, taken singly, might well be conceived undesigned and accidental; but that they should all be such is morally

impossible. Yet opponents argue respecting the credibility of the Christian miracles abstractedly, as if they were insulated occurrences, without any known or conceivable purpose; as *e.g.*, what testimony is sufficient to establish the belief that a dead man was restored to life?" And then they proceed to show that the probability of a Revelation, abstractedly considered, is not such at least as to establish the fact that one *has* been given. Whereas, if it were *first* proved (as may easily be done) merely that there is no such abstract improbability of a Revelation as to exclude the evidence in favour of it, and that if one *were* given, it must be expected to be supported by miraculous evidence, then, just enough reason would be assigned for the occurrence of miracles, not indeed to establish them, but to allow a fair hearing for the arguments by which they are proved.

A great advantage in the arrangement of arguments, is possessed by the speaker over the writer. The speaker compels his hearers to consider the several points brought before them, in the order which he thinks best. Readers, on the contrary, will sometimes, by dipping into a book, or examining the table of contents, light on something so revolting to some prejudice, that though they might have admitted the proofs of it, if they had read it in the *order designed*, they may at once close the book in disgust.

The arrangement of Words is of no little importance to style. It is like the proper distribution of the lights in a picture; which is hardly of less consequence than the correct and lively representation of the objects.

It is no uncommon trick with some writers, by the invention and adoption of complete new sets of technical terms,

to pass off long-known truths for prodigious discoveries, and gain the credit of universal originality by the boldness of their innovations in language; like some voyagers of discovery, who *take possession* of countries, whether before visited or not, by formally giving them *new names*.

By a multiplicity of words, the sentiment, like David in Saul's armour, is incumbered and oppressed.

The completeness of a library does not consist in the number of volumes, especially if many of them are *duplicates*, but in its containing copies of each of the most valuable works. Nor was Lucullus's wardrobe, which, according to Horace, boasted five thousand mantles, necessarily well-stocked, if other articles of dress were wanting. And in like manner, true copiousness of language consists, not in a multitude of synonyms and circumlocutions, but in having at command, as far as possible, a suitable expression for each *different* modification of thought. The greater our command of language, the more concisely we shall be enabled to write.

Many a speaker is lauded as "having a fine command of language," of whom it might better be said, that "his language has a command of him." He has the same "command of language" that a rider has of a horse that is running away with him.

The censure of frequent and long parentheses, has led writers into the preposterous expedient of leaving out the marks by which they are indicated. It is no cure to a lame man to take away his crutches.

Fine writing ought not to be looked for in the treatment of scientific subjects. There is a neatness, indeed, and a sort of beauty resulting from the appearance of healthful vigour in a well-tilled corn-field; but one which is overspread with blue and red flowers, gives no great promise of a crop.

Pope's rhymes too often supply the defect of his reasons.

What is said of human approbation as compared with intrinsic rectitude — that it is a very good thing when it happens to come incidentally, but must never be made an object —may be said of forcible or elegant expressions as compared with Truth. The desire of Truth must reign supreme, and everything else be welcomed only if coming in her train.

When the moon shines brightly, we are apt to say, "How beautiful is this *moon-light!*" — but in the daytime, "How beautiful are the trees, the fields, the mountains!" — and, in short, all *objects* that are illuminated: we never speak of the sun that makes them so. Just so, the really greatest orator shines like the sun, making you think much of the *things* he is speaking of; the second-best shines like the moon, making you think much of *him* and his *eloquence.*

Without undertaking to maintain, like Quintilian, that no one can be an orator who is not a virtuous man, yet, as the orator is bound as such, on rhetorical principles, to be exclusively intent on *carrying his point*, there certainly is a kind of moral excellence implied in that renunciation of all effort to gain approbation, or even avoid censure, except with a view to that point,—in that forgetfulness of self, which is absolutely necessary, both in the manner of writing, and in the delivery, to give the full force to what is said. The

orator should adopt as his motto the reply of Themistocles, —"Strike, but hear me."

Men of uncultivated minds generally admire the profundity of what is mystical and obscure — mistaking the muddiness of the water for depth, and magnifying in their imagination what is seen through a fog. But this tendency becomes a grave evil, when this cloudy style is made use of, as it now is, by modern infidels, to conceal from the unwary the fact of their being decidedly anti-christian. The dark sayings of such writers may be compared to a fog-bank at sea, which the mariner, at first glance, takes for a chain of majestic mountains, but which, when he turns his glass upon it, proves nothing more than a heap of noxious vapours.

The taste of many, in the present day, sets very strongly in favour of a sort of mystical sublimity,—of a style full of high-sounding words, sometimes hardly English, — which dimly expresses, or obscurely hints at, doctrines supposed to be above the reach of ordinary mortals, and such as ordinary language could not express at all. And such a style is admired, not only as very eloquent,—not only as displaying originality of genius,—but as highly "*philosophical*," and as placing the writer far above any one who condescends to be "practical," that is, who writes so that his hearers may understand distinctly what he says, and *learn* something from it, and become the wiser or the better for it.

"A fico for the world," (says Ancient Pistol)
"and wordlings base!
I speak of Africa and golden joys."

Thus the gorgeous visions which floated before the imagination of the alchemists, of the philosophers' stone and the

universal medicine, made them regard, with impatient scorn, the humble labours of metallurgy and pharmacy.

And it is not, as might at first sight be supposed, that men are, in each case, led by their favourite writers to mistake falsehood for truth. The fault lies deeper. Truth — which used to be regarded as the first point, in all Philosophy,—is, according to this new school, a matter of secondary consideration. The ingenious, the splendid, the original, the "poetic and ideal" — everything that may enable a man to be the "founder of a school," by dazzling a host of idolizing followers, and converting (to use Bacon's language), his own "Idola Specics" into "Idola Theatri"—all this is regarded as more *philosophical* than the attainment of Truth; and high encomiums are actually lavished on "the freshness of spirit, and breadth of view" of a writer's religious speculations, *even when erroneous?*

Now if, even in what relates to revealed *religion*, to that which comes from the Most High, and which concerns man's eternal welfare, — if in *these* matters, Truth is regarded as of less account than "glorious imaginations" and "eloquent sublimity,"—we may well expect that, in all other subjects, the striking and showy will be more thought of, than the right and true; and that Poetry and Oratory will not merely be preferred to Philosophy, but will usurp her place and assume her name.

It may always be anticipated that Truth when it is once understood, and when it is allowed on which side it lies, will before long prevail. Error, on any point, may indeed bear rule for any length of time, while undetected; but when its real character is fully exposed, the days of its reign are numbered. Not that its practical overthrow is even then *immediate*. Sound principles must not only be brought into

notice, and clearly explained, but must be allowed some time to become familiar to men's minds, before they will be acted on. The words which Shakspeare puts into the mouth of Dogberry, probably in mere sport, may be taken as a correct description of what actually takes place in many departments of life. "It hath been *proved* already that you are stark knaves; and it will go near to be *thought* so shortly."

It often happens that, before a popular audience, a greater degree of skill is requisite for maintaining the cause of truth than of falsehood, from the difficulty of exhibiting, in their full strength, the delicate distinctions on which truth sometimes depends.

Many are misled by their admiration of what is called a *powerful* discourse, forgetting that that is the most powerful which best effects the *object proposed.* The power of a sample of gunpowder, or of a piece of ordnance, is tested, not by the loudness of the report, but by the depth of the impression made on the target.

Many a meandering discourse one hears, in which the preacher aims at nothing, and—hits it.

"Words," says Hobbes, "are the counters of wise men, and the money of fools." Hence, the latter can never distinguish a verbal, from a real, question.

The true meaning of a word, is that which it expresses; and the right name of a thing, is that which it is called by.

One of the most common sources of dissension, is the mistaking the meaning of others; and hence, the word *misunderstanding* is applied to disagreements in general.

All men, except idiots, reason in some sort or another, consciously or unconsciously — many being in the condition of Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who had been talking prose all his life, without knowing it. Now what most men *will* do, whether well or ill, it must be of the utmost importance they should be qualified for doing well.

As it is an advantage in algebraical calculations, to employ a letter of the alphabet, as a symbol to denote some unknown quantity, while remembering, that this does not make it become at once a *known* quantity; so it is a convenience, to affix names to our own indistinct and imperfect notions, provided, when grown familiar with these names, we do not forget how little we know of the things themselves.

Long and habitual attention to the different meanings of the same word, and assiduous vigilance in the use of it, are necessary to prevent our sliding insensibly from one meaning into another, and fancying that we are still speaking of the same thing, because we are employing the same sound.

It is to be observed, that the words whose ambiguity is the most frequently overlooked, and is productive of the greatest amount of confusion of thought and fallacy, are among the commonest, and are those of whose meaning the generality consider there is the least room to doubt. *Familiar acquaintance* is perpetually mistaken for *accurate knowledge.*

There is no mistake more common than the mistake of the *unquestioned* for the *unquestionable.*

The ambiguity in all languages of almost all the words relating to the Physical Cause and the Logical Proof of any-

thing, has produced incalculable confusion of thought, and from which it is the harder to escape, on account of its extending to those very forms of expression, which are introduced to clear it up.

> "——Chaos umpire sits,
> And by deciding, worse embroils the fray."

To cease to use words in their transferred sense, from the primary to the secondary, would, if it were desirable, be utterly impracticable; but there cannot be too great attention to the ambiguity thus introduced, nor too constant watchfulness against the errors thence arising. 'It is with *words* as with *money*.' Those who know the value of it best are not therefore the least liberal. We may *lend* readily and largely; and though this be done quietly and without ostentation, there is no harm in keeping an exact account in our private memorandum-book, of the sums, the persons, and the occasions on which they were lent. It may be, we shall want them again for our own use; or they may be employed by the borrower for a wrong purpose; or they may have been so long in his possession, that he begins to look upon them as his own. In either of which cases, it is allowable, and even right, to call them in.

All use is not the standard for a word, but *good* use. Those who have a right of suffrage in this matter are, first, educated people; — secondly, those who are careful in their use of language, — yet, thirdly, free from affectation; — fourthly, having no particular theory (like Horne Tooke's) on the subject of language, — nor, fifthly, on the subject to which the terms in question belong; — sixthly, the appeal must be made to their intentional and established practice, not to their occasional and incidental *deviations* from it.

Arguments from analogy, convenience, etymology, &c., are, in this matter, to be then only listened to, when use is doubtful or indifferent: they are like the counsellors of a despot, whose office is to sway his deliberations when he is in doubt, but not to oppose his decisions.

Nothing, perhaps, has contributed more to the error of Realism than inattention to the ambiguity of the word "Same," which is employed to denote great similarity; a sense very different from its primary one, as applicable to a *single* object. When several persons are said to have One and the *Same* opinion—thought—or idea,—many men, overlooking the true simple statement of the case, which is, that they *are all thinking alike*, look for something more abstruse and mystical, and imagine there must be some one thing, in the primary sense, though not an individual, which is present at once in the mind of each of these persons: and thence readily sprung Plato's theory of ideas; each of which was, according to him, one real, eternal, object, existing entire and complete in each of the individual objects that are known by one name. Hence, first in poetical mythology, and ultimately, perhaps, in popular belief, Fortune, Liberty, Prudence (Minerva), a boundary (Terminus), and even the Mildew of corn (Rubigo), &c., became personified, deified, and represented by statues; somewhat according to the process which is described by Swift, in his humorous manner, in speaking of Zeal (in the *Tale of a Tub*), "how from a notion it became a word, and from thence, in a hot summer, ripened into a tangible substance." An old story is told of a learned gentleman, who, despising female intellect, lent to a lady, as a joke, Locke's Essay. When she returned it, he asked her what she thought of it: she replied that there seemed to her very many good things in it, but there was

one word she did not clearly understand — the word *idea* (as she pronounced it, which, by the way, is just as we do pronounce it in the original Greek); he told her it was the feminine of "idiot." Now it is more than doubtful whether the learned gentleman, or *Locke himself*, understood in what sense he used the word, any more than the lady; only, that *she* had the sagacity to perceive that she did not.

Whatever personal identity does consist in, it is plain that it has no necessary connexion with similarity; since, when we say of any man that he is greatly altered since such a time, we understand, and indeed imply, by the very expression, that he is one person, though different in several qualities; else it would not be *he*. Every one would be ready to say, "When I was a child, I thought as a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

The ambiguity of the word "plain" has, probably, produced many indifferent sermons. A young divine perceives the truth of the maxim, that "for the lower orders one's language cannot be too plain" (that is, *clear* and *perspicuous*, so as to require no learning nor ingenuity to understand it): and when he proceeds to practice, the word "plain" indistinctly flits before him, as it were, and often checks him in the use of *ornaments* of style, such as metaphor, epithet, and antithesis, &c., which are opposed to 'plainness' in a totally different sense of the word; being by no means necessarily adverse to *perspicuity*, but rather, in many cases, conducive to it; as may be seen in several of the clearest of our Lord's discourses, which are the very ones that are the most richly adorned with figurative language. This ambiguity often causes men to write in a dry and bald style,

which has no advantage in point of perspicuity, and is least of all suited to the taste of the vulgar, who are pleased with an ornamental style, even in excess.

The word 'Contingent,' though applied to events only, not to persons, yet denotes no quality in the events themselves, only the relation in which they stand to a person, who has no complete knowledge concerning them. For the same thing may be, at the same time, both certain and uncertain to different individuals; *e.g.*, the life or death at a particular time of any one is certain to his friends on the spot; uncertain or contingent to those at a distance. It is from overlooking this principle, obvious as it is when once distinctly stated, that Chance or Fortune has come to be regarded as a real *agent*, and to have been by the ancients personified as a goddess and represented by statues.

An undetected ambiguity in the word 'tendency' has led to the doctrine, as mischievous as it is, I conceive, unfounded, that since there is a tendency in population to increase faster than the means of subsistence, hence, the pressure of population against subsistence may be expected to become greater and greater in each successive generation, (unless new and extraordinary remedies are resorted to,) and thus to produce a progressive diminution of human welfare; — whereas, it is well known, that all civilized countries have a greater proportionate amount of wealth, now, than formerly. By a "tendency" towards a certain result is sometimes meant "the existence of a cause which, if *operating unimpeded*, would produce that result." In this sense, it may be said with truth that the earth, or any other body moving round a centre, has a *tendency* to fly off at a tangent, *i. e.*, the centrifugal force operates in that direction, though it is controlled

by the centripetal. But sometimes again "a tendency towards a certain result" is understood to mean the existence of such a state of things that that result *may be expected to take place.*" Now it is in these two senses that the word is used in the two premises of the argument in question. But in this latter sense the earth has a greater tendency to remain in its orbit than to fly off from it; and (as may be proved by comparing a more barbarous with a more civilized period in the history of any country) in the progress of society, subsistence has a tendency to increase at a greater rate than population. In Great Britain, for instance, much as the population has increased within the last five centuries, it yet bears a less ratio to subsistence (though still a much greater than could be wished) than it did five hundred years ago.

It is a common logical error, to suppose that what *usually* belongs to the *thing* is implied by the *usual* sense of the *word*. Although most noblemen possess large estates, the word 'nobleman' does not imply the possession of a large estate. Although most birds can fly, the ordinary use of the term 'bird' does not imply this; since the penguin and the ostrich are always admitted to be birds. And though, in a great majority of cases, *it so happens*, by the appointment of Providence, that wealth is acquired by labour, the ordinary use of the word 'wealth' does not include this circumstance; since every one would call a pearl an article of wealth, even though a man should chance to meet with it in eating an oyster. It is not that pearls fetch a high price *because* men have dived for them; but, on the contrary, men dive for them because they fetch a high price.

There are two different *applications* of the word 'Experi-

ence,' which, when not carefully distinguished, lead in practice to the same confusion as the employment of it in two senses: viz., we sometimes understand *our own* personal Experience, sometimes GENERAL Experience. Hume has availed himself of this (practical) ambiguity, in his *Essay on Miracles;* in which he observes, that we have Experience of the frequent falsity of testimony; but that the occurrence of a Miracle is contrary to our Experience, and is consequently what no testimony ought to be allowed to establish. Now had he explained *whose* Experience he meant, the argument would have come to nothing: if he means the Experience of mankind universally, that is, that a Miracle *has never* come under the experience of *any one;* this is palpably begging the question: if he means the experience of each individual who has never himself witnessed a miracle, this would establish a rule (viz., that we are to believe nothing of which we have not ourselves experienced the like), which it would argue insanity to act upon. Not only was the king of Bantam justified, (as Hume himself admits) in listening to no evidence for the existence of Ice, but no one would be authorized, on this principle, to expect his own death: his experience informs him, directly, only that *others* have died, while every disease under which *he himself* may have laboured his experience tells him has not terminated fatally; if he is to judge strictly of the future by the past, according to this rule, what should hinder him from expecting the like of all future diseases?

Much sophistry has been founded on the neglect of the distinction between three senses of the word "Impossibility," — or three kinds of Impossibilities, the mathematical, the physical, and the moral. A mathematical impossibility is that which involves an absurdity and a self-contradiction;

which may be called a mathematical impossibility, being irreconcilable with propositions, the truth of which is necessary and eternal; since it amounts only to a conformity to the hypothesis we set out with. Every such Impossibility must be implied — though we may not perceive it — in the terms employed, — in short, it must be properly a *contradiction in* terms. For instance, that two straight lines should enclose a space, is not only impossible but inconceivable, as it would be at variance with the definition of a straight line. And it should be observed, that inability to accomplish anything which is in this sense, impossible, implies no limitation of *power*, and is compatible even with omnipotence, in the fullest sense of the word. If it be proposed, to construct a triangle having one of its sides equal to the other two, it is not from a defect of power that we are precluded from solving such a problem as this; since in fact the problem is in itself unmeaning and absurd: it is in reality, nothing that is required to be done.

Secondly — What may be called a Physical Impossibility, is something at variance with the existing Laws of Nature, and which consequently no Being subject to those Laws (as we are) can surmount; but we can easily conceive a Being capable of bringing about what in the ordinary course of Nature is impossible. For instance,—To multiply five loaves into food for a multitude, or to walk on the surface of the waves, are things physically impossible, but imply no contradiction; on the contrary, we cannot but suppose that the Being, if there be such an one, who created the Universe, is able to alter at will the properties of any of the substances it contains. And an occurrence of this character we call miraculous. Not but that one person may perform without supernatural power what is to another physically impossible; as, for instance, a *man* may lift a great weight, which it

would be physically impossible for a *child* to raise; because it is contrary to the Laws of Nature that a muscle of *this* degree of strength should overcome a resistance which one of *that* degree is equal to. But if any one perform what is beyond his own natural powers, or the natural powers of Man universally, he has performed a miracle. Now, as has been above observed, much sophistry has been founded on the neglect of the distinction between these two senses. It has even been contended that no evidence ought to induce a man of sense to admit that a miracle has taken place, on the ground that it is a thing impossible to man; in other words, that it *is a miracle;* for if it were *not* a thing impossible to man, there would be no miracle in the case; so that such an argument is palpably begging the question; but it has often probably been admitted from an indistinct notion being suggested of Impossibility in the first sense; in which sense (viz., that of self-contradiction) it is admitted that no evidence would justify belief.

Thirdly — Moral Impossibility signifies only that high degree of improbability which leaves no room for doubt. In this sense we often call a thing impossible, which implies no contradiction, or any violation of the Laws of Nature, but which yet we are rationally convinced will never occur merely from the multitude of chances against it; as, for instance, that unloaded dice should turn up the same faces one hundred times successively. The performance of anything that is *morally* impossible to a mere man, is to be reckoned a miracle, as much as if the impossibility were physical. It is morally impossible for poor Jewish fishermen to have framed such a system of ethical and religious doctrine as the Gospel exhibits. It is morally impossible for a man to foretell distant and improbable future events with the exactitude of many of the prophecies in Scripture.

Hume disputes against miracles as contrary to the course of Nature, whereas, according to him, there is no such thing as a course of Nature. His scepticism extends to the whole external world,— to everything except the ideas or impressions on the mind of the individual: so that a miracle which is *believed*, has, in that circumstance alone, on his principles, as much reality as anything can have.

It is not denial, but doubt, that is opposed to *credulity*. To disbelieve is to believe. And there may be cases in which doubt itself may amount to the most extravagant incredulity. For instance, if any one should "doubt whether there is any such country as Egypt," he would be, in fact, believing this most incredible proposition,— that "it is possible for many thousands of persons unconnected with each other to have agreed, for successive ages, in bearing witness to the existence of a fictitious country, without being detected, contradicted, or suspected."

All this, though self-evident, is, in practice, frequently lost sight of: the more, on account of our employing, in reference to the Christian religion, the words "Believer and Unbeliever;" whence unthinking persons are led to take for granted that the rejection of Christianity implies a less *easy belief* than its reception.

A 'Presumption' in favour of any supposition, according to the most correct use of the term, means not, (as has been sometimes erroneously imagined) a preponderance of probability in its favour, but, such a pre-occupation of the ground as implies that it must stand good till some sufficient reason is adduced against it; in short, that the Burden of Proof lies on the side of him who would dispute it. The importance

of deciding on which side lies the *onus probandi* is very great: on the determination of this question the whole character of a discussion will often very much depend. A body of troops may be perfectly adequate to the defence of a fortress against any attack that may be made on it; and yet, if, ignorant of the advantage they possess, they sally forth into the open field, they may suffer a repulse. At any rate, even if strong enough to act on the offensive, they ought still to keep possession of their fortress. In like manner, if you abandon your position, by suffering the Presumption on your side to be forgotten, which is in fact *leaving out* one of, perhaps, your strongest arguments, you may appear to be making a feeble attack, instead of a triumphant defence.

There is a Presumption in favour of every existing institution. No one is *called on* (though he may find it advisable) to defend an existing institution, till some argument is adduced against it: and that argument ought in fairness to prove, not merely an actual inconvenience, but the possibility of a change for the better.

Every book, again, as well as person, ought to be presumed harmless (and consequently the copy-right protected by our courts), till something is proved against it.

There is a "Presumption" against anything *paradoxical*, that is, contrary to the prevailing opinion: it may be true, but the Burden of Proof lies with him who maintains it; since men are not expected to abandon the pervading belief till some reason is shown. Hence it is, probably, that one often hears a charge of "paradox and nonsense" brought forward, as if there were some close connexion between the two. And, indeed, in our sense this is the case; for, to those who are too dull, or too prejudiced, to admit any notion

at variance with those they have been used to entertain, that may appear nonsense, which, to others, is sound sense. Thus, "Christ crucified" was "to the Jews a stumbling-block" (paradox), "and to the Greeks, foolishness;" because the one "required a sign" of a different kind from any that appeared: and the others "sought after wisdom" in their schools of philosophy.

Accordingly, there was a presumption against the Gospel in its first announcement. The burden of proof lay with the Jewish peasant, who claimed to be the promised Deliverer, in whom all the nations of the Earth were to be blessed. No one could be fairly called on to admit his pretensions, till He showed cause for believing in Him. If He "had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin."

Now the case is reversed. Christianity exists; and the burden of proof lies plainly with him who rejects it; which, if it were not established by miracles, demands an explanation of that still greater miracle—its having been established, in defiance of all opposition, by human contrivance. It is indeed highly expedient, to bring forward more proofs of the divine origin of Christianity than may fairly be *demanded* of you; but it is always desirable that it should be *known*, that all this is an argument *ex abundanti*—over and above what can fairly be called for—and the strength of the cause should be estimated accordingly.

In the case of any *doctrines* professing to be essential parts of the Gospel-revelation, the fair *presumption* is, that we shall find all such distinctly declared in Scripture. If any one maintains, on the ground of tradition, the necessity of some additional article of faith, (as, for instance, that of purgatory), or the propriety of a departure from the New

Testament precepts (as, for instance, in the denial of the cup to the Laity in the Eucharist), the burden of proof lies with him. We are not called on to prove that there is no tradition to the purpose;—much less, that no tradition can have any weight at all in any case. It is for *him* to prove, not merely generally, that there is such a thing as tradition, and that it is entitled to respect, but, that there is a tradition relative to each of the points which he thus maintains; and that such tradition is, in each point, sufficient to establish that point. For want of observing this rule, the most vague and interminable disputes have often been carried on respecting tradition, generally.

There is (according to the old maxim of "*peritis credendum est ice arte sua*") a presumption, (and a fair one,) in respect of each question, in favour of the judgment of the most eminent men in the department it pertains to,—of eminent physicians, *e. g.*, in respect of medical questions, — of theologians, in theological, &c. And by this presumption, many of the Jews in our Lord's time seem to have been influenced, when they said, "Have any of the rulers or of the pharisees believed on Him?"

But there is a counter-presumption, arising from the circumstance that men, eminent in any department, are likely to regard with jealousy any one who professes to bring to light something unknown to themselves; especially if it promise to *supersede*, if established, much of what they have been accustomed to learn, and teach, and practise. And moreover, in respect of the medical profession, there is an obvious danger of a man's being regarded as a dangerous experimentalist, who adopts any novelty, and of his thus losing practice, even among such as may regard him with admiration as a philosopher. In confirmation of this, it may be

sufficient to advert to the cases of Harvey and Jenner. Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, is said to have lost him most of his practice, and to have been rejected by every physician in Europe, above the age of forty. And Jenner's discovery of vaccination had, in a minor degree, similar results.

There is also this additional counter-presumption against the judgment of the proficients in any department, that they are prone to a bias in favour of everything that gives the most palpable *superiority* to themselves over the uninitiated (the Idiotæ), and affords the greatest scope for the employment and display of their own peculiar acquirements. Thus, *e. g.*, if there be two possible interpretations of some clause in an Act of Parliament, one of which appears obvious to every reader of plain, good sense, and the other can be supported only by some ingenious and far-fetched legal subtlety, a practised lawyer will be liable to a bias in favour of the latter, as setting forth the more prominently his own peculiar qualifications. And on this principle, in great measure, seems founded Bacon's valuable remark; "Harum artium sæpe pravus fit usus, *ne sit nullus.*" Rather than let their knowledge and skill lie idle, they will be tempted to misapply them; like a schoolboy, who, when possessed of a knife, is for trying its edge on everything that comes in his way. On the whole, accordingly, I think that of these two opposite presumptions, the counter-presumption has often as much weight as the other, and sometimes more.

"Men imagine," says Bacon, "that their minds have the command of language; but it often happens that language bears rule over their mind." Some of the weak and absurd arguments which are often urged against Suicide, may be traced to the influence of words on thoughts. When a

Christian moralist is called on for a direct *Scriptural precept* against Suicide, instead of replying that the Bible is not meant for a complete code of *laws*, but for a system of *motives* and *principles*, the answer frequently given is, "Thou shalt do no *murder*," and it is assumed in the arguments drawn from reason, as well as in those from Revelation, that Suicide is a species of murder; viz., because it is *called* self-*murder:* and thus, deluded by a name, many are led to rest on an unsound argument, which, like all other fallacies, does more harm than good, in the end, to the cause of truth. Suicide, if any one considers the nature and not the name of it, evidently wants the most essential characteristic of murder, viz., the *hurt and injury* done to one's neighbour, in depriving him of life, as well as to others, by the *insecurity* they are in consequence liable to feel. And since no one can, strictly speaking, do *injustice* to himself, he cannot, in the literal and primary acceptation of the words, be said either to rob or to murder himself. He who deserts the post to which he is appointed by his great Master, and presumptuously cuts short the state of probation graciously allowed him for "working out his salvation" (whether by action or by patient endurance), is guilty indeed of a grievous sin, but of one not in the least analogous in its character to murder. It implies no inhumanity. It is much more closely allied to the sin of wasting life in indolence, or in trifling pursuits, — that life which is bestowed as a seed time for the harvest of immortality. What is called, in familiar phrase, "killing time," is, in truth, an approach, as far as it goes, to the destruction of one's own life; for "Time is the stuff life is made of."

The best argument against duels is, that they confer a character of daring spirit, which all in some degree admire,

on such conduct as would otherwise degrade a man. If one gives another the lie, he would be cut as an unmannerly brute, but for the rule which allows you to "call him out." He is ready to give satisfaction, and is somewhat admired for his courage. But for duelling, he could give no satisfaction for such an offence to society, which would accordingly send him to Coventry.

The defence, certainly the readiest and most concise, frequently urged by the sportsman, when accused of barbarity in sacrificing unoffending hares or trout to his amusement, is to reply, as he may safely do, to most of his assailants, "Why do you feed on the flesh of the harmless sheep and ox?" and that this answer presses hard, is manifested by its being usually opposed by a *palpable falsehood;* viz., that the animals which are killed for food are sacrificed to our *necessities*, though not only men *can*, but a large proportion (probably a great majority) of the human race actually *do*, subsist in health and vigour without flesh-diet; and the earth would support a much greater human population, were such a practice universal. When shamed out of this argument, they sometimes urge, that the brute creation would overrun the earth, if we did not kill them for food; an argument which, if it were valid at all, would not justify their feeding on *fish;* though, if fairly followed up, it *would* justify Swift's proposal for keeping down the excessive population of Ireland. The true reason, viz., that they eat flesh for the gratification of the palate, and have a taste for the pleasures of the table, though not for the sports of the field, is one which they do not like to assign.

The word "expect" is liable to an ambiguity which may sometimes lead, in conjunction with other causes, to a practi-

cal bad effect. It is sometimes used in the sense of "anticipate," "calculate on," &c. (ἐλπίζω), in short, "consider as *probable*," sometimes for "require or demand as reasonable," — "consider as right" (ἀξιῶ). Thus, I may fairly, "expect" (ἀξιῶ) that one who has received kindness from me, should protect me in distress; yet I may have reason to expect (ἐλπίζειν) that he will not. "England expects every man to do his duty;" but it would be chimerical to expect, that is, anticipate, a universal performance of duty. Hence, when men of great revenues, whether civil or ecclesiastical, live in the splendour and sensuality of Sardanapalus, they are apt to plead that this is *expected* of them; which may be perhaps sometimes true, in the sense that such conduct is anticipated as probable; not true, as implying that it is required or approved. What may reasonably be expected (in one sense of the word), must be precisely the practice of the majority; since it is the majority of instances that constitutes *probability*: what may reasonably be expected (in the other sense), is something much beyond the practice of the generality; as long, at least, as it shall be true, that "narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it."

The expressions "Matter (or question) of Fact" and "Matter of Opinion," are not employed by all persons with precision and uniformity. Decidedly it is *not* meant, by those, at least, who use language with any precision, that there is greater *certainty*, or more general and ready *agreement*, in the one case than in the other. By a "Matter (or question) of Opinion," is understood anything respecting which an exercise of *judgment* would be called for on the part of those who should have certain objects before them, and who might conceivably disagree in their judgment there-

upon; for instance, that one of Alexander's friends did, or did not, administer poison to him, every one would allow to be a question of *fact*, though it may be involved in inextricable doubt; while the question, *What sort of an act* that was, supposing it to have taken place, all would allow to be a question of *opinion*, though probably all would agree in their opinion thereupon.

Again, it is not apparently necessary that a "Matter of Fact," in order to constitute it such, should have ever been actually submitted—or likely to be so—to the senses of any human being; only, that it should be one which *conceivably might* be so submitted: for instance, whether there is a lake in the centre of New Holland,—whether there is land at the South Pole — whether the moon is inhabited, — would generally be admitted to be questions of *fact*, although no one has been able to bear testimony concerning them; and, in the last case, we are morally certain that no one ever will.

And in this, and many other cases, *different* questions, very closely connected, are very apt to be confounded together, and the proofs belonging to one of them brought forward as pertaining to the other: for instance, a case of alleged prophecy shall be in question: the event, said to have been foretold, shall be established as a fact; and also the utterance of the supposed prediction *before* the event; and this will perhaps be assumed as proof of that which is in reality another question, and a "question of opinion;" whether the supposed prophecy *related* to the event in question; and again, whether it were merely a *conjecture* of human sagacity, or such as to imply superhuman prescience.

Again, whether a certain passage occurs in certain Manuscripts of the Greek Testament, is evidently a question of Fact; but whether the words imply such and such a doc-

trine,—however indubitable it may justly appear to us, — is evidently a "Matter of Opinion."

It is observable also, that, as there may be (as I have just said), questions of Opinion *relative* to Facts, so there may also be questions of Fact relative to Opinions; that is, that such and such Opinions were, or were not, *maintained* at such a time and place, by such and such persons, is a question of Fact.

It is no wonder that the longest mathematical demonstration should be so much more easily constructed and understood than a much shorter train of just reasoning concerning real facts. For, not only are the mathematical definitions very few, but the axioms are still fewer, and always employed in the same simple form; and both are, for the most part, laid down and placed before the student in the outset; while, on the other hand, in all reasonings that regard matters of fact, fresh and fresh facts are introduced almost at every step to a very great number; and the maxims employed admit of, and require, continual modifications in the application of them. The former has been aptly compared to a long and steep, but even and regular, flight of steps, which tries the breath, and the strength, and the perseverance only; while the latter resembles a short but rugged and uneven ascent up a precipice, which requires a quick eye, agile limbs, and a firm step; and in which we have to tread, now on this side, now on that,—ever considering, as we proceed, whether this or that projection will afford room for our foot, or whether some loose stone may not slide from under us.

The knowledge of facts, whether much or little, will often be worse than useless to those who are deficient in the power of discriminating and selecting; just as food is to a body,

whose digestive system is so much impaired as to be incapable of separating the nutritious portions.

Men of very inferior powers, sometimes, by immediate observation, discover perfectly new facts empirically; and may thus be of service in furnishing materials to those master minds that, by their skilful selection and combining of truths long and generally known, elicit important, and hitherto unthought of, conclusions. Theirs are master minds, to whom the others stand in the same relation as the brick-maker or stone quarrier to the architect.

Information, as to matters of fact, may easily be referred in the mind to the person from whom we have derived it: but scientific truths, when thoroughly embraced, become much more a part of the mind, as it were; since they rest, not on the authority of the instructor, but on reasoning from data, which we ourselves furnish: they are scions engrafted on the stems previously rooted in our own soil; and we are apt to confound them with its indigenous productions.

Information gives us absolutely new knowledge; Instruction developes what we had.

The office of a philosopher is to infer; of an advocate, to prove.

The number of those who are, not only *qualified* to appreciate justly the force of arguments, but who are also accustomed to this employment of their faculties, is probably less than is supposed. When a man maintains, on several points, opinions which are true, and assigns good and sufficient reasons for them, both he himself and others are apt to

conclude at once that he is convinced by those reasons; whereas the truth will often be that he has taken upon trust both the premises and the conclusion, as well as the connexion between them; that he is indolently repeating what he has heard, without performing any process of reasoning in his own mind; and that, if he had not been early trained or predisposed to admit the conclusion, and it had been presented to him as a novelty, the arguments which support it, though in themselves valid, would have had little or no weight with him. If such a man then enters on any new field of enquiry, his deficiencies at once become apparent. He is in a situation analogous to that of children, taught by a negligent or unskilful master, who are often found able, apparently, to read with great fluency in a book they have been accustomed to, though, in reality, they are not so much reading, as repeating by rote the sentences they have often gone over; and, if tried in a new book, are at a loss to put two syllables together.

People often read good books because it is a good thing to read good books; and because everything they have read is perfectly good and true, they set it down among the praiseworthy actions of their life: instead of regarding such studies as means, and means only, towards a further end, the non-attainment of which renders them as utterly worthless as the act of sowing the land with seed that never comes up. This fully accounts for the approbation bestowed on religious and moral books, when they are utterly undeserving of it. If a farmer was paid for *sowing* his seed merely, and had no anxiety to get a good crop, he would not distinguish very accurately between good seed and bad. Some may think that a book of this kind, if it does no good, can at least do no harm: not so; for whatever furnishes a man with the

pretence of performing a duty when he is not, so far does harm.

It is so very easy to gain the approbation of those who are already of your opinion, and so very difficult to change any one's opinion, that nearly the whole effect of writing, as far as concerns propagation of doctrines, is upon minds on that point *fallow* — not preoccupied by an opinion, or wavering.

The effect produced by any book or speech of an argumentative character, on any subject on which diversity of opinion prevails, may be compared — supposing the argument to be of any weight — to the effects of a fire-engine on a conflagration. That portion of the water which falls on solid stone walls, is poured out where it is not needed. That, again, which falls on blazing beams and rafters, is cast off in volumes of hissing steam, and will seldom avail to quench the fire. But that which is poured on wood work that is just beginning to kindle, may stop the burning; and that which wets the rafters not yet ignited, but in danger, may save them from catching fire. Even so, those who already concur with the writer as to some point, will feel gratified with, and perhaps bestow high commendation on an able defence of the opinion they already held; and those, again, who have fully made up their minds on the opposite side, are more likely to be displeased than to be convinced. But both of these parties are left nearly in the same mind as before. Those, however, who are in a hesitating and doubtful state, may very likely be decided by forcible arguments. And those who have not hitherto considered the subject, may be induced to adopt opinions which they find supported by the strongest reasons. But the readiest and warmest approbation an author meets with, will

usually be from those whom he has *not* convinced, because they were convinced already. And the effect, the most important and the most difficult to be produced, he will usually, when he does produce it, hear the least of. Those whom he may have induced to reconsider, and gradually to alter, previously fixed opinions, are not likely, for a time at least, to be very forward in proclaiming the change.

If there could be a book (on moral or religious subjects) which every one thought very convincing, this would be a sign that it had convinced nobody.

What most people most readily and most cordially approve, is the echo of their own sentiments; and whatever effect this may produce, if any, must be short-lived. We hear of volcanic islands thrown up in a few days to a formidable size, and, in a few weeks or months, sinking down again or washed away; while other islands, which are the summits of banks covered with weed and drift sand, continue slowly increasing year after year, century after century. The man that is in a hurry to see the full effects of his own tillage, should cultivate annuals and not forest trees.

Observation digs the materials; Reasoning erects the building.

The idea of enlightening incorrect reasoners by supplying them with additional facts, is an error similar to that of the two boys, in the tale of *Sandford and Merton*, who, having put to a house a flat roof, through which, of course, the rain came, vainly thought to remedy their mistake by laying on more straw.

Susceptibility is the foundation of attachment; but it is strength of feeling that ripens it into a genial and durable friendship.

So far as any human fault or folly is peculiar to any *particular age* or *country*, its effects may be expected to pass away soon, without spreading very widely; but so far as it belongs to *human nature* in general, we must expect to find the evil effects of it reappearing, again and again, in various forms, in all ages, and in various regions. Plants brought from a foreign land, and cultivated by human care, may often be, by human care, extirpated, or may even perish for *want* of care; but the indigenous product of the soil, even when seemingly eradicated, will again and again be found springing up afresh:

> "Sponte suâ quæ se tollunt in luminis oras
> Infecunda quidem, sed læta et fortia surgunt.
> Quippe sola natura subest."

Ten thousand of the greatest faults in our neighbours, are of less consequence to *us* than one of the smallest in ourselves.

The relief that is afforded to mere want, as want, tends to increase that want.

Vices and frailties correct each other, like acids and alkalies. If each vicious man had but one vice, I do not know how the world could go on.

The power of duly appreciating *little* things, belongeth to a great mind: a narrow-minded man has it not; for to him they are *great* things.

Many a one is apt to conclude that whatever is left to a man's *discretion*, is left to his *indiscretion*.

Many a *would*-be great knave is, from intellectual deficiency, only a small knave.

What is very clearly demonstrated will often appear to a superficial reader so evident as to need no demonstration; and the ability which has been employed to *make* it thus plain and evident, is disparaged in consequence of its own success. When the hills are completely cut away, and the chasm bridged over, and the swamps rendered firm, so that the steam-carriage glides smoothly along, the traveller is apt to think lightly of the obstacles that were to be overcome.

The task allotted to the Christian in all human transactions, is not to *obtain* men's gratitude and good-will; but to deserve it

It is not enough for the Christian to conform his faith to the doctrines of his religion; but he must also conform his temper to its spirit.

A member of *any* Church that acknowledges the divine authority of Scripture, and yet maintains persecuting dogmas, must be inconsistent, whether he hold to the Gospel against his Church, or to his Church against the Gospel.

As so many men are in several points, *worse* than their principles, so men may occasionally be found *better* than some of their principles.

Some who are continually calling attention to the empty or half-empty churches in some parishes, while wholly over-

looking the three times as many parishes in which there is a distressing want of church accommodation, seem to proceed in the way that Balak did with Balaam, "Come now and I will bring thee to another place, where thou shalt see but the uttermost part of them, and *shalt not see them* all; and curse me then from thence."

Every page of history furnishes instruction wherewith to judge of the future by the past, and to supply rules, not only of public expediency, but also of private duty.

In considering remote events, too little allowance is made, while in recent cases, too much is made, for the circumstances in which the agents were placed.

We ought never to look back on our emancipation from a corrupt system, without also looking forward to guard vigilantly against the like corruptions.

Every instance of a man's suffering the penalty of the law, is an instance of the failure of that penalty in effecting its purpose, which is, to deter.

Many a man renounces the shackles of Papal infallibility, as it were in a spirit of rivalry, that he may become a Pope to himself.

No general principles can ever teach their own application, or supersede the exercise of practical good sense, cautious deliberation and Christian candour.

It is one thing to *wish to have Truth on our side*, and another thing to wish to be *on the side of Truth*.

A preacher should ask himself, "Am I about to preach because I want to say something, or because I have something to say?"

There are some persons who are ready to denounce, as persecuting, every system which does not leave them at liberty to persecute others.

To inflict, or to denounce, punishment, must be either a duty or a sin.

Stumbling-blocks in religion will always be found by those who seek them.

Charity is not to be attained, at the expense of our faith and our hope.

The ordinary popular use of the words "moral" and "morality" is much more limited than what may be called the philosophical sense of them: the latter comprehending the tempers, as well as the outward acts to which the popular sense is, usually, restricted.

It is too often forgotten, that better does not necessarily imply "good."

He only is exempt from failures, who makes no efforts.

Some persons see no medium between regarding a point as absolutely essential, or absolutely indifferent.

Men find self-congratulation more agreeable than self-examination.

Good manners are a part of good morals.

Though a course of action be in itself better than the one a man judges to be right, it would not be right for *him* to take it, if at variance with his own convictions.

We must beware of hastily taxing with wilful blindness, those whose views are limited only by the lowness of their position.

Never, while the world lasts, will the inconsiderate and the violent be prevented from confounding together things, which differ *only* in the point which is of most essential importance, or from indiscriminately censuring whatever has been much abused.

Falsehood is difficult to be maintained. When the materials of a building are solid blocks of stone, very rude architecture will suffice ; but a structure of rotten materials needs the most careful adjustment to make it stand at all.

He who points out the improbability of a current story, is not bound to suggest an hypothesis of his own. One may surely be allowed to hesitate in admitting the stories, which the ancient poets tell, of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions being caused by imprisoned giants, without being called upon satisfactorily to account for these phenonema.

The very difference between the cases of those in different ages and countries from our own, makes the examples adduced from them more instructive, by proving that they are not *copied* the one from the other, but originate in a common and deep-seated source.

Men underrate the danger of any evil that has been escaped.

No original and essentially inherent principle of the human mind, any more than any organ of the human body, is in itself either mischievous or useless. The maxim that Nature does nothing in vain, is not more true in the material, than in the moral, world.

It is a folly to expect men to do all that they may reasonably be expected to do.

Most men are admirers of justice, — when justice happens to be on their side.

We should ever regard that as the worst extreme, to which we are by *nature the more* prone.

In proportion as we approach towards a state of anarchy, we are always approaching to the condition of the worst kind of oligarchy,—the domineering of a few violent and unscrupulous men over the rest.

Cæsar was not the only man who would rather be the first in a village than the second at Rome.

To detect the excess of a disposition totally unlike our own, is as easy as it is of little concern to us ; while to guard against our *own* peculiar propensities, is at once the hardest task, and, to ourselves, incomparably the most important.

The more confidently secure we feel against our liability to any error, to which in fact we are liable, the greater must be our danger of falling into it.

In our judgment of human transactions, the law of optics is reversed; we see the most indistinctly, the objects which are close around us.

Of all hostile feelings, Envy is perhaps the hardest to be subdued, because hardly any one *owns* it, even to himself; but looks out for one pretext after another to justify his hostility.

The *mistake* a man makes by a false statement advantageous to his views, is like the mistake a man sometimes makes of taking a better umbrella by chance, instead of his own, and then, not thinking it worth while to return it.

Whatever is worth mentioning at all, is worth mentioning correctly.

He who has *trumpeted forth* an accusation, ought not to think it sufficient to *whisper* his recantation.

Some are satisfied with not *cherishing* faults in themselves, while they are quietly *tolerating* them. A plant may be in a garden from two causes, either from being planted designedly, or found there and left there. Either implies some degree of approval.

To enquire how we would act in any supposed case, even when such as could not possibly occur, is to apply a test which *decomposes*, as the chemists say, the complex mass of our motives, and enables us to ascertain on what principle we are acting.

Men often regard as zeal for God's honour, what is perhaps, in truth, rather zeal for their own honour.

An evil propensity confessed is half cured: people irritate themselves, by trying to prove that they are not irritable.

So intimate is the connection of different errors, that they will generally be found, if not directly to generate, yet mutually to foster and promote one another.

So strong is the combined attraction of Antiquity and Novelty, that any system that offers gratification to the desire for both, needs a very small portion of truth to gain it eager and general acceptance.

Men are not always *right* in their use of their rights.

The imprudent spendthrift, finding that he is able to afford this, or that, or the other, expense, forgets that all of them *together* will ruin him.

A statesman, without wisdom, does mischief *in proportion* as he is clever.

Some men's reputation seems like seed-wheat, which thrives best when brought from a distance.

Our best feelings should ever be under the control of our best judgment.

Affectation seems rather a sign of modesty, than of conceit. Who would paint if they thought their natural complexion good? But many confound together *vanity* and self-conceit, which are different in themselves, and often tend to opposite results.

In the strong objections to every plan that may be proposed, men are apt to forget the strong objections there are to adopting no plan at all. A man may have it in his power to go to a place where he wishes to be, either by sea or by land, and there may be advantages in each mode of travelling, but if he is resolved to forego *none* of those advantages, he can never set out.

If a man is not too mad to intend what he does, he is not too mad to be punished for it.

Some speak so vehemently of their feeling no anger and very great contempt for any attack made upon them, as to raise a suspicion that they feel just the reverse.

It is remarkable that a man is usually less offended with those who profess to understand what he does not, than with those who acknowledge their inability to comprehend what he holds to be clearly intelligible; since these last will appear to entertain a suspicion, at least, of what is, probably, the truth, that he has been deluding himself with empty fallacies, and grasping a phantom.

How easy it is to forgive *injuries*, compared with many things that are no injuries! But people may object to this use of the word *forgive;* we will not insist on using it, though Miss Elizabeth Smith says, "A woman has need of extraordinary gentleness and modesty to be *forgiven* for possessing superior ability and learning." And she, I believe, *was* forgiven, accordingly.

But not to insist on a word, — instead of "forgive" say "judge fairly, and feel kindly," towards

(1.) One who adheres to the views which *were* yours, and which you have changed (this was one of Paul's trials).

(2.) One who had proved right in the warning and advice he gave you, and which you rejected.

"I bear you no ill-will, Lizzy," says Mr. Bennett in Miss Austen's Pride and Prejudice, "for being justified in the warning you gave me: considering how matters have turned out, I think this shows some magnanimity."

(3.) One who is preferred to you by the woman you are in love with; or has carried off some other prize from you: especially if he has attained with little or no exertion, what you have been striving hard for, without success. (Vid. *Arist. Rhetoric*, φθυνος).

(4.) One who has succeeded in some enterprise when you had predicted failure.

In all these and some other cases, there is evidently no injury: and therefore "I hate," some will say, "to hear *forgiveness* spoken of, when in fact there is nothing to forgive." Be it so: but do not go on to imagine that you have therefore no need to keep down, with *strong effort*, just the same kind of feelings that you *would* have, if there *had* been an injury.

If you take for granted *because* there is no injury, therefore there is no care needful to repress such feelings, inasmuch as they are so manifestly unjust, the result will be that you will *not* repress, but indulge them. You will never acknowledge to yourself the real ground of your resentful feelings (as you do in the case of an injury), but you will find out some *other* ground, real or imaginary: "it is not that the man adheres to his own original views; but that he maintains them with uncharitable violence: it is not that I grudge him his success; but that he is too much puffed up with it; or he is not fully deserving of it," &c.

If you cultivate, in the right way, the habit of forgiving

injuries, you will acquire it; and not else. And if you are *content* with *this*, and do *not cultivate* that candour which I have been speaking of, you will be deficient in that: for be assured it does not *grow wild* in the soil of the human heart. And the groundlessness and injustice of the feelings which *will* grow wild there, is a reason, not why you should *neglect* to extirpate them, but why you should be the more ashamed of not doing so.

To expect to tranquillize and benefit a country by gratifying its agitators, would be like the practice of the superstitious of old, with their sympathetic powders and ointments; who instead of applying medicaments to the wound, contented themselves with *salving the sword* which had inflicted it. Since the days of Dane-gelt downwards, nay, since the world was created, nothing but evil has resulted from concessions made to intimidation.

Conflicting prejudices serve as an *imperfect substitute for impartiality*. And if no wise and moderate measures were framed and adopted, except by wise and moderate men, the world would go on much worse than it does.

That is, in a great degree, true of all men, which was said of the Athenians, that they were like sheep, of which a flock is more easily driven than a single one.

Kindle the dry sticks, and the green ones will catch.

If you begin by attempting to reform, and to instruct, those who need reformation and instruction the most, you will often find them unwilling to listen to you. Like green sticks, they will not catch fire. But if you begin with the most teachable and best disposed, when you have succeeded

in improving these, they will be a help to you in improving the others.

Children and fools should not see a work that is half done. They have not the sense to see what the artist is designing. The whole of this world that we see, is a *work half done;* and thence fools are apt to find fault with Providence.

Clouds afar look black or gay;
Closely seen, they all are grey.

It is just so with many a public man, who will be found by those immediately around him neither so detestable nor so admirable, as perhaps he is thought by opposite parties.

A character which will not defend itself, is seldom worth defending.

Silver gilt will often pass,
Silver for gold, or else for brass.

Some men who, at the first glance, give the idea of something very superior indeed, rather beyond what they really are, are ultimately either underrated or overrated.

The generality of mankind are as good and as wise as—— the generality.

A man's coat may well fit him, when it is made to his measure.

Never is the mind less fitted for self-examination, than when most occupied in detecting the faults of others.

To deprecate the utility of secondary motives, is to betray an ignorance of human nature.

Mankind are not formed to live without ceremony and form: The "inward, spiritual grace" is very apt to be lost without the "external, visible sign." Many are continually setting up for the expulsion of ceremonies from this or that, and often, with advantage, when *they* have so multiplied as to grow burdensome; but if ever they have carried this too far, they have been either forced to bring back some ceremonies, or have found the want of them. The same is found in the minor department of manners; when form is too much neglected, true politeness suffers diminution; then, we are obliged to bring some back, and when these again grow burdensome, we lay them aside again; so that there is a continual flux and reflux. Upon the whole, we may conclude that *ceremony* and form of every kind derive their necessity from our imperfection. If we were perfectly spiritual, we might worship God without any form at all, without ever uttering words; as we are not, it is a folly to say, "One may be just as pious on one day as another, in one place or posture as another," &c. I answer, angels may; man cannot. Again, if we were all perfectly benevolent, good-tempered, attentive to the gratifying of others, &c., we might dispense with all the forms of good-breeding; as it is, we cannot; we are not enough of heroes to fight without discipline. Selfishness will be sure to assail us if we once let the barriers be broken down. At the same time it is evident from what has been said, that the *higher our nature is carried, the less form we need.*

But though we may deservedly congratulate society on being able to dispense with this or that ceremony, do not let us be in a hurry to do so, till we are sure we *can* do without it. It is taking away crutches to cure the gout. The opposite extreme of substituting the external form for the thing signified, is not more dangerous or more common, than the

neglect of that form. It is all very well to say, "There is no use in bidding good-morrow or good-night to those who know I wish it; of sending one's love, in a letter, to those who do not doubt it," &c. All this is very well in theory, but it will not do for practice. Scarce any friendship, or any politeness, is so strong as to be able to subsist without any external supports of this kind; and it is even better to have too much form than too little.

Men are admired for what they are, commended for what they do, and macarized for what they have.

He that assails error because it *is* error, without respect of persons, must be prepared for a storm from the party who were fanning him with the gentle breath of applause, so long as he had been dealing with the errors of the party opposed to them. They say with the rat,—

> "This cat, if she murder a rat,
> Must needs be a very great sinner,
> But to dine upon mice, can't be counted a vice;
> I *myself* like a mouse for my dinner."*

Men often earnestly, but not very successfully, endeavour to put down that party which they have themselves fostered into strength and popularity. The little birds—according to the proverb—which are vainly chasing about the full-grown cuckoo, had themselves reared it as a nestling. And the horse in the fable, who, seeking aid against his enemy the stag, had allowed an insidious ally to mount, and to put his bit into his mouth, found it afterwards no easy matter to unseat him.

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* Quoted from recollections of a ludicrous poem on a house much infested with rats, into which a cat had been introduced.

No appellation, however honourable in itself, and however fairly applicable, can be innocently assumed as the badge of a party. Those of the Corinthians, who said, "I am of Christ," using the title to *distinguish* them *from other members of the same Church*, were no less censured than those who said, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos."

Men become attached to a party in whose ranks they have fought.

The stream of truth is gentle, but permanent; while passionate party-clamour is like a winter torrent, — impetuous, but transitory.

Unhappily, a great portion of our species are not very wise, and a good many of them not very honest. The former, if they hear of a person who does not admit the *grounds* on which they believe something, take for granted that he does not believe it at all; and the latter think it meritorious to take advantage of the silliness of the others, to garble and misrepresent their opponent's expressions, in order to expose him to odium, thus acting like those tyrannical emperors, who used to dress up their victims in the skins of wild beasts, and then set dogs at them to worry them to death.

It is worth remarking that Party Spirit, in its violation of Shakespeare's maxim, "Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice," generally *unites* the two opposite extremes. For, it is the tendency of party spirit to pardon anything in those who heartily support the party, and *nothing* in those who do not.

Those who, from single sentences and passages apart from the context, represent an author as favouring Socinian, Sa-

bellian, or Arian views, should recollect that the same is notoriously the case with the *Bible itself;* since otherwise, those sects—each appealing to Scripture, which they interpret according to their own respective views — *never could have arisen.*

To misrepresent the argument of an opponent, is virtually to admit that what he has really said, is not open to refutation.

The principal cautions to be observed in the treatment and judgment of those who differ from us, whether on minor or essential points, are, first, to beware of *mistaking the meaning* of any one, and imputing to him sentiments which he does not really entertain; secondly, to make due allowance for *weakness* of intellect, backwardness in knowledge and inaptitude for *accurate statements;* and thirdly, to allow also for such differences of natural or acquired *temper and taste,* as imply nothing sinful; differences which even divine inspiration, as we may perceive from the characteristic style of composition of each of the sacred writers, does not entirely do away.

The difference between self-love and selfishness has been well explained by Aristotle; though he has not accounted for the use of the word φιλαυτια. It is clear that selfishness exists only in reference to others, and could have no place in one who lived alone on a desert island, though he might have of course every degree of self-love; for selfishness is not an excess of self-love, and consists not in an over-desire of happiness, but in placing your happiness in something which interferes with, or leaves you regardless of, that of others.

It is a mistake to suppose, that selfishness and want of feeling are either the same, or inseparable. Now, on the one

hand, I have known such as have had very little feeling, but felt for others as much nearly as for themselves; and were, therefore, far from selfish: and, on the other hand, some of very acute feelings, feel for no one but themselves, and indeed, are sometimes amongst the most cruel.

Again, some are capable of making grand and generous sacrifices on great occasions, who yet indulge an habitually selfish temper in trifles.

It is remarkable, that freedom from selfishness is not a virtue that is particularly well learned from example, but rather the contrary; *e. g.*, a parent who is never thinking of her own convenience, but always of her children's advantage, will be likely to let that too plainly appear, so as to fill the child with an idea that everything is to give way to him, and that his concerns are an ultimate end. Nay, the very pains taken with him in *strictly* controlling him, heighten his idea of his own vast importance; whereas a parent who is selfish, will be sure to accustom the child to sacrifice his own convenience; and to understand that he is of much less importance than the parent; and so in some other cases. Accordingly, selfishness is caught from those who have least of it.

Aristotle had the eye of a bird, both telescopic and microscopic.

One of the most exalted and least acquirable, talents is Totality; not every one who has bricks, has a house.

The more a man knows, the more he will feel of admiration, and the less of surprise.

Though the word "Pedantry" is applied, almost exclusively, to the introduction in ordinary conversation of learned

technicalities; yet the thing is found in all professions; and chiefly in those which are not learned; no one has it more than the sailor.

The most ordinary and unimportant actions of a man's life, will often show more of his natural character and his habits than more important actions, which are done *deliberately*, and sometimes *against* his natural inclinations. And again; what is said or done by very inferior persons, who seldom think for themselves, or act resolutely on their own judgment, is the best sign of what is *commonly* said or done in the place and time in which they live. A man of resolute character and of an original turn of thought, is less likely to be led by those around him, and, therefore, does not furnish so good a *sign* of what are the *prevailing* opinions and customs.

Concealment is the great spur to curiosity, which gives an interest to investigation. The celebrated Letters of Junius would, probably, have long since been forgotten, if the author could have been clearly pointed out at the time.

Men are never so ready to study the interior of a subject, as when there is something of a veil thrown over the exterior.

Every precaution not to offend the pride of others has an obvious tendency to allay it. The less the wound is chafed, the more likely it is to heal.

It is worth remarking, that many persons are of such a disposition as to be nearly incapable of *remaining* in doubt on any point that is not wholly uninteresting to them. They speedily make up their minds on each question, and come to

some conclusion, whether there are any good grounds for it or not. And judging — as men are apt to do, in all matters — of others, from themselves, they usually discredit the most solemn assurances of any one who professes to be in a state of doubt on some question; taking for granted that if you do not adopt their opinion, you must be of the opposite.

Others again there are, who are capable of remaining in doubt as long as the reasons on each side seem exactly *balanced;* but not otherwise. Such a person, as soon as he perceives any — the smallest — preponderance of probability on one side of a question, can no more refrain from deciding immediately, and with full conviction, on that side, than he could continue to stand, after having lost his equilibrium, in a slanting position, like the famous tower at Pisa. And he will, accordingly, be disposed to consider an acknowledgment that there are somewhat the stronger reasons on one side, as equivalent to a confident decision.

The tendency to such an error is the greater, from the circumstance, that there are so many cases, in practice, wherein it is essentially necessary to come to a *practical* decision, even where there are no sufficient grounds for feeling *fully convinced* that it is the right one. A traveller may be in doubt, and may have no means of deciding, with just confidence, which of two roads he ought to take; while yet he must, at a venture, take one of them. And the like happens in numberless transactions of ordinary life, in which we are obliged practically to make up our minds at once to take one course or another, even where there are no sufficient grounds for a full conviction of the understanding.

The infirmities above mentioned are those of *ordinary* minds. A smaller number of persons, among whom, however, are to be found a larger proportion of the intelligent, are prone to the opposite extreme; that of not deciding, as

long as there are reasons to be found on both sides, even though there may be a clear and strong preponderance on the one, and even though the case may be such as to call for a practical decision. As the one description of men rush hastily to a conclusion, and trouble themselves little about premises, so, the other carefully examine premises, and care too little for conclusions. The one decide without enquiring, the other enquire without deciding.

A charge without proof, as a verdict without evidence, must always be unjust; whether the accused be, in fact, innocent or guilty.

The imperfect and confused sympathy we have with others, in respect of their feelings towards us, and indeed universally, may be likened to nothing so well as to the mixture of transparency and reflection in plate-glass. We sympathize, as Adam Smith observes, with an idiot or a madman; forming an indistinct idea of being in his situation, and at the same time retaining (which is a contradictory supposition) our present views of his actions. Just as one looks through the window at a tree, and sees, by an imperfect reflection, his own face as if placed in the midst of the tree; which if it were, he could not have that view of the tree. And even so, we cannot imagine people talking of us after our death, without the idea presenting itself of our hearing what they say

We never can be sure what would be our impression derived from such and such a passage alone, and without any reference to our pre-conceived notions. It is one of the most difficult exercises of imagination to fancy yourself ignorant of what you really know, and a mere white sheet of

paper in reference to some subject on which you have actually formed opinions. A Jury is often exhorted by the Judge to give a verdict *entirely* from the evidence given in court, without any regard to what they may have heard or thought previously; all which, they are to divest themselves of, and *lay aside*. But this is a precept easier to give than to observe: *e.g.*, if you had never *at once handled* and *looked* at a globe and a cube, or a dog and a cat, you would not, on seeing them for the first time, know which was which. Bishop Berkeley undertook to prove this; but it was thought a monstrous paradox till experiments proved that he was right. Words expressing some *thing* seem to us to imply what has been in our minds associated with that thing.

Writers of great note have declaimed on the much stricter observance, in the Universe, of the laws of Nature, than, in mankind, of the divine and human laws, overlooking the yet obvious distinction, that, in the former case, it is the observance that *constitutes* the law, whereas in the other case, the law is not more or less a law from the conformity, or nonconformity, of individuals to it.

Weak men, having been warned that "wisdom and wit" are not the same thing, and that ridicule is not the test of Truth, distrust everything that can possibly be regarded as witty; not having judgment to perceive the combination, when it occurs, of Wit with sound Reasoning. The ivy-wreath conceals from their view the point of the Thyrsus. He that can laugh at what is ludicrous, and at the same time preserve a clear discernment of sound and unsound reasoning, is no ordinary man.

Many are sometimes scandalized when some folly that has been forced into connection with religion is laughed at as if

religion itself were ridiculed. It is true, indeed, that to attack even error in religion with mere ridicule, is no wise act, because good things may be ridiculed as well as bad. But it surely cannot be our duty to abstain from showing plainly that absurd things *are* absurd, merely because people cannot help smiling at them. If so, the more directly absurd anything is, the more secure it is from refutation; since it is impossible to refute such things, without placing them in a ludicrous point of view. A tree is not impaired by being cleared of mosses and lichens, nor Truth, by having folly or sophistry torn away from around it.

The essence of a Jest is its mimic sophistry — a sophistry so palpable as not to be likely to deceive any one, but yet bearing just that resemblance of argument which is calculated to amuse by the contrast; in the same manner that a parody does, by the contrast of its levity with the serious production which it imitates. There is indeed, something laughable even in fallacies which are intended for serious conviction, when they are thoroughly exposed.

There are several different kinds of joke and raillery which will be found to correspond with the different kinds of fallacy. The Pun (to take the simplest and most obvious case) is evidently, in most instances, a mock argument founded on a palpable equivocation of the middle-term. It is probable, indeed, that all jests, sports, or games, properly so called, will be found, on examination, to be *imitative* of serious transactions, as of War or Commerce.

That censure and commendation should, in many instances be indiscriminate, can surprise no one who recollects how rare a quality discrimination is; and how much better it suits

indolence, as well as ignorance, to lay down a rule than to ascertain the exceptions to it.

How many act like Sinbad's monkeys, who pelted their enemies with cocoa-nuts!

> He that is truly wise and great,
> Lives both too early and too late.

A very eminent man comes too *late* for some purposes, and too *early* for others.

True generosity seems to consist chiefly in *standing by*, as it were, to contemplate all your own actions in the character of an unconcerned and judicious spectator: imperiously dictating to yourself, in spite of all individual feelings, that conduct which would appear to such a spectator the most beautiful.

It is a curious circumstance, when persons past forty before they were at all acquainted, form together a very close intimacy of friendship. For grafts of old wood to take, there must be a wonderful congeniality between the trees.

Two people, who are each of an unyielding temper, will not act well together; and people who are *all of them* of a very yielding temper, will be likely to resolve on nothing; just as stones without morter make a loose wall, and morter alone, no wall. So says the proverb —

> "Hard upon hard makes a bad stone wall,
> But soft upon soft makes none at all.

Increase of a thing is often confounded with our increased knowledge of it. When crimes or accidents are recorded in

newspapers more than formerly, some people fancy that they *happen* more than formerly. But crimes, *especially* (be it observed) *such as are the most remote from the experience of each individual*, and therefore strike him as something *strange*, always furnish interesting articles of intelligence. I have no doubt that a single murder in Great Britain has often furnished matter for discourse, to more than twenty times as many persons as any twenty such murders would in Turkey.

Some foreign traveller in England is said to have remarked on the perceptible *diminution in the number of crimes* committed during the sitting of Parliament as a proof of our high reverence for that assembly; the fact being, as we all know, that the space occupied in the newspapers by the Debates causes the *records* of many crimes to be omitted.

This tendency to overrate the amount of whatever is *known*, *seen*, and definite, as compared with what is (either from the nature of the case, or accidentally) unknown or less known — unseen — indefinite, is a most important principle to keep in mind for the correction of a whole class of errors in popular judgment. — Under this head comes the supposed superiority of wisdom attributed to cautious, reserved, non-confiding, do-nothing characters, as compared with the more open, unreserved, energetic and parihesiastic characters. Of course, every one will admit that there may be an extreme either way. But take the average, the moderate description, of each class, and you will find that a dozen of the more open and daring character, supposing an equality in other points in respect of ability, will have had, though they do commit a greater number of actual tangible *errors* and meet with a greater number of distinct failures, have had altogether full as much success, have *got on* as well, if not better, than a dozen of the other.

Whence then the over-estimate of those who are called the

"prudent?" Because their failures are, in general, indefinite, and are neither known nor distinctly existing. If I never go on horseback, I never incur the definite evil of being stopped in a journey by a fall from a horse, or by a runaway or restive horse: I may exult over the rider's accidents of this kind, but in the long run he will have accomplished, in spite of all, more journeys than I could on foot. If I let my land be waste, I shall not have to reckon, this year and that year, a failure of crop, but my neighbour, with all his losses, will perhaps, make more of his farm. He who thinks it always best not to mention things, and thus trusts no one, is never betrayed, but he loses all the advantages of friendship. "There are other motes besides those in the sun-beam."

Men are liable to form an over-estimate of the purity of morals in the Country, as compared with a Town; or in a barren and thinly-peopled, as compared with a fertile and populous district. On a given area, it must always be expected, that the absolute amount of vice will be greater in a Town than in the Country; so also will be that of virtue; but the *proportion* of the two must be computed on quite different principles. A physician of great skill and in high repute, probably loses many more patients than an ordinary practitioner: but this proves nothing, till we have ascertained the comparative numbers of their patients. Mistakes such as this (which are very frequent) remind one of the well-known riddle, "What is the reason that white sheep eat more than black ones?"

There is no good reason for calling the condition of the rudest savages "a state of nature," unless the phrase be used (as perhaps in strictness it ought) to denote merely ignorance

of Arts. A plant would not be said to be in its natural state, which was growing in a soil or climate that precluded it from putting forth the flowers and the fruit for which its organization was destined. In like manner, the natural state of man must, according to all fair analogy, be reckoned, not that in which his intellectual and moral growth are, as it were, stunted, and permanently repressed, but one in which his original endowments are, not indeed brought to perfection, but enabled to exercise themselves and to expand, like the flowers of a plant; and especially, in which that characteristic of our species, the tendency towards *progressive improvement*, is permitted to come into play.

Melancholy as it is to see, as we may, for instance, in our own country, multitudes of Beings of such high qualifications and such high destination as Man, absorbed in the pursuit of merely temporal objects — occupied in schemes for obtaining wealth and worldly aggrandizement, without any higher views in pursuing them, — we must keep in mind that such a devotedness to temporal objects is no characteristic of a more wealthy and civilized, as distinguished from a more barbarian, state of society; and that the savage is not *above* such a life, but *below* it. It is not from preferring virtue to wealth —the goods of the mind to those of fortune—the next world to the present — that he takes so little thought for the morrow; but, from want of forethought and habitual self-command. The civilized man, too often, directs those qualities to an unworthy object; the savage, universally, is deficient in the qualities themselves. The one is a stream flowing, too often, in a wrong channel, and which needs to have its course altered; the other is a stagnant pool.

The declaimers upon the incompatibility or discordancy

of natural Wealth and Virtue, are, by their own showing, mere declaimers, and nothing more: Seneca's discourses in praise of poverty would, I have no doubt, be rivalled by many writers of this island, if one-half of the revenues he drew from the then inhabitants of it, by lending them money at high interest, were proposed as a prize. Such declaimers against wealth resemble the Harpies of Virgil, seeking to excite disgust at the banquet of which they are themselves eager to partake.

The goods of this world are by no means a trifling concern to Christians, considered *as* Christians. They *are*, in themselves, goods; and it is our part, instead of affecting ungratefully to slight or to complain of God's gifts, to endeavour to make them *goods to us*, by studying to use them aright. Whether indeed we ourselves shall have enjoyed a large or a small share of them, will be of no importance to us a hundred years hence; but it will be of the greatest importance, whether we shall have employed the faculties and opportunities granted to us, in the increase and diffusion of those bounties of Providence among others.

Of the two evils connected with a high degree of division of labour, which may prove unfavourable to national morality — the evil of reducing each man too much to the condition of a mere machine, or rather one part of a machine, by the too great concentration of the attention on the performance of a single, and sometimes very simple, operation, resulting in the contraction of the faculties and consequent debasement of mind — and the danger of being thrown out of work — the appropriate remedies are, I think, to be found in judicious education and habits of provident frugality. And in another expedient, which provident good sense would

suggest, as a safe-guard against the last danger, that the several members of a family should betake themselves, as far as that is possible, to *different occupations*. That advanced state of society, which is the most exposed to the evils, is also the most favourable to the application of the remedies.

Among the classes of persons to whom emigration seems peculiarly appropriate, may be mentioned that description of workmen, not so frequent in this country now as formerly: viz., a *Jack-of-all-trades:* the perfection to which the subdivision of labour has been brought, having caused them to fall into disrepute. As Plato remarks of a certain class of philosophers (who, notwithstanding the lofty appellation bestowed on them, were neither more nor less than artists of this description), no one chooses to employ the one man who can do many things tolerably, when he can have access to several who can do each of them excellently; and hence, though in general men of superior ingenuity, their poverty is become proverbial. They have, accordingly, the more reason to try their fortune in a young settlement, which is exactly their proper field. A scattered population, bad roads, remoteness from towns, and a novel situation, leave in a most helpless condition the man who has concentrated all his powers in learning to perform some one operation very skilfully, and who has no resources. A new country, and a young settlement, is the best place, likewise, for many who may have been goaded by the pressure of distress, combined with the inflammatory declamations of designing men, to feel impatient of the burden of taxes and poor-rates. Thus irritation will have time and opportunity to subside, in a country where there are no tumultuous meetings, in populous towns, of unemployed manufacturers; but where all their

neighbours, as well as themselves, have something better to do, than to set about new modelling the constitution,—where the chief reform called for is to convert forests into corn-fields, in which no one will hinder them from laying the axe to the root of the evil,—and in which the desire of novelty may be fully gratified, without destroying established institutions,—where, in short, the whole structure of society is to be built up, without being previously pulled down.

Every settler in a foreign colony is, necessarily, more or less, a missionary to the aborigines — a missionary for good, or a missionary for evil — operating upon them by his life and example.

It is often said that our Colonies ought to provide for their own spiritual wants. But the more that is done for them in this way, the more likely they will be to make such provision; and the more they are neglected, the less likely they are to do it. It is the peculiar nature of the inestimable treasure of Christian Truth and Religious Knowledge, that the more it is withheld from people, the less they wish for it; and the more bestowed upon them, the more they hunger and thirst after it. If people are kept upon a short allowance of food, they are eager to obtain it; if you keep a man thirsty, he will become the more and more thirsty; if he is poor, he is exceedingly anxious to become rich; but if he is left in a state of spiritual destitution, after a time he will, and still more his children, cease to feel it, and cease to care about it. It is the last want men can be trusted, in the first instance, to supply for themselves.

The direct effects of religion on national character, few will be disposed to deny, even of those who believe in no re-

ligion, since of several different forms of superstitious error, supposing all religions to be such, one may at least be more compatible with moral improvement than another.

Not, however, that religion has not an indirect effect also, through its influence on national prosperity. To take one point out of many, War, which, if Christianity were heartily and generally embraced, would be wholly unknown, has been, even as it is, much mitigated by that humanizing influence. Now War is, in the present day, generally regarded, though to a far less degree than it really is, as a great destroyer of wealth. But the direct demoralizing effect of War is probably still greater than its impoverishing effect. The same may be said of Slavery, in its various forms, including the serfship of the Russians and the Hungarians. If both Slavery and War were at an end, the wealth of nations would increase, but their civilization in the most important parts would increase in a still greater ratio.

It is characteristic of the puerile and the semi-barbarian condition of mind to be disposed to violate the wise maxim of "pas trop gouverner."

In Legislative Punishment, the point that should rank first of, and above, all other considerations, is that it should be formidable, *i. e.*, that the apprehension of it should operate, as much as possible, to deter men from crime, and thus to prevent the necessity of its actual infliction;—secondly, that it should be *humane; i. e.*, that it should occasion as little as possible of useless suffering — of pain or inconvenience, that does not conduce to the point proposed; — thirdly, that it should be corrective, or at least not corrupting; tending to produce in the criminal himself, if his life be spared, and in others, either a moral improvement, or, at least, as little as

possible of moral debasement;—and lastly, that it should be cheap. . . . This last point is of far less consequence than the others.

The *preventive* effects of any system, whether for good or evil, are hardly ever duly appreciated. We see the crimes that are actually committed, and we see the men who are hanged for them; we do not see the crimes that *would* be committed if there were no hanging.

The occasions for the exercise of a certain power may be very few, and yet the existence of the power not the less important; because when such an occasion does arise, (and it is the more likely to arise if there be no provision to meet the emergency,) the consequence of not being prepared for it may be most disastrous. If any one should be so wearied with the monotonous "All's well" of the nightly guardians of a Camp, hour after hour, and night after night, as to conclude that their service was superfluous, and, accordingly, to dismiss them, how much real danger, and how much unnecessary apprehension, would be the result!

An evil is not necessarily unreal, because it has been often feared without just cause; the wolf does sometimes enter in, and make havoc of the flock, although there have been many false alarms.

As custom will often blind men to the good, as well as to the evil effects, of any long established system, we should never alter for the mere sake of altering.

As it would not tend much to the improvement of the regular public high-roads, or to amend the direction of them,

should each man be ready to break a pathway for himself, as his own convenience may suggest; so nothing tends more to prevent the regular abrogation, or alteration, of unwise laws, than the irregular infringement or evasion of them.

The truest friend to liberty, is the supporter of regular and moderate government; and the firmest bulwark of royal authority, is the judicious advocate of the subject's rights.

Oppression is a false step, which it is peculiarly difficult to retrace. As its brutalizing effects cannot immediately be done away by its removal, they at once furnish a pretext for justifying it, and make relief hazardous. Kind and liberal treatment, if very cautiously and judiciously bestowed, will, *gradually* and *slowly*, advance men towards the condition of being worthy of such treatment: but treat men as aliens or enemies, — as slaves, as children, or as brutes, and they will *speedily* and *completely* justify your conduct.

The sense of wrong and insult is often felt more than injury. It is unpleasant in going through a wood, to have the wet boughs bang against one's face; but who feels this, as he should a man's spitting in his face, and slapping him at pleasure? This should be remembered, when comparisons are instituted between the condition of the most hard-worked labourer in Europe, and that of a Slave.

Some Systems are defended — and Negro Slavery among the rest—by saying, that the evils are merely incidental, and form no part of the design. If this means merely, that no system should be at once condemned, solely because some incidental evils are connected with it, as some must be with *every* system, in this we heartily concur. Navigation is a

good thing, although ships are occasionally wrecked, and men drowned. But to put out of account, altogether, the greater or less liability to abuses, and the greater or less enormity of them, and quietly to ignore every *incidental* evil, would be, in the ordinary concerns of life, regarded as a proof of insanity. Who, for instance, would leave children at play in a room full of loaded fire-arms, and edge-tools, and open casks of gunpowder? Yet the tools were not *designed* to cut them, or the guns to shoot them. If they maim, kill, or blow up one another, these are only *abuses*. The best mode we can think of, for disabusing one who holds such an opinion, is, that he should take up his abode next door to a soap-boiler, with a brazier on the other side of his house, a slaughter-house over the way, and a store of gunpowder in the vaults beneath him; being admonished at the same time, to remember that if his eyes, nose, and ears, are incessantly annoyed, and he is ultimately blown up, these are only *incidental* evils.

Some, even Englishmen, who have visited Slave States, are satisfied at being told that the Slaves are far better off, and more civilized there, than in their own barbarian countries, which is, probably, for the most part true. But, why have the African countries continued so long in gross barbarism? They have long had intercourse with Europeans, who might have taught them to raise Sugar and Cotton, &c., at home for the European markets, and in other ways might have civilized them. And it cannot be said that they are incapable of learning, since free Negroes in various countries, though they have the disadvantage of being a degraded caste, are yet (however inferior to us), far advanced beyond the savage tribes of Africa. But it is the very *Slave-trade itself* that has kept them barbarians, by encouraging wars for the

purpose of taking captives to be sold as slaves, and the villanous practices of kidnapping, and trading in each other's happiness and liberties. It is the very system itself which men seek to excuse, by pointing out the comfortable state of Slaves when they are caught and sold, that, to a great extent, produces, and must, if persisted in, perpetuate, the barbarous condition with which this comparative comfort is contrasted. The whole of these African tribes might, under a better system, have enjoyed, in freedom, far, very far, greater comfort in their native land, than that which *some* of them now possess, as slaves, in a foreign land.

Though it may not depend on each of us, whether this, or that, evil shall take place; it *does* depend on us, whether we shall have any share in it.

It is curious to observe the odd *limitations* of power, in those who seem despotic, and yet *cannot* do what seem *little* things; *e. g.*, when the Romans took possession of Egypt, the people submitted, without the least resistance, to have their *lives and property* at the mercy of a foreign nation. But one of the Roman soldiers happening to kill a cat in the streets of Alexandria, they rose on him and tore him from limb to limb; and the excitement was so violent that the generals overlooked the outrage for fear of insurrection!— Claudius Cæsar tried to introduce a letter which was wanting in the Roman Alphabet; the consonant V as distinct from U, they having but one character for both. He ordained that Ⅎ (an F reversed) should be that character. It appears on some inscriptions in his time; but he could not establish it; though he could *kill or plunder his subjects at pleasure!* So can the Emperor of Russia: but he cannot change the *style.* It would displace the days of saints whom his people

worship, and it would produce a formidable insurrection! Other instances of this strange kind of anomaly might doubtless be produced.

It is supposed by most people, that Trial by Jury, as it now exists, is one of our most ancient institutions. But there is good reason to believe, that, originally, causes were decided, not by the Jury, but entirely by the Judge. In order to aid him in the Trial, twelve men of respectable character were taken from the neighbourhood where the witnesses lived, as being likely to know something of them, and to be able to form a judgment how far each of them was to be trusted. And after these witnesses had been examined in their presence, they gave their opinion on the whole of the evidence, and the Judge decided. By degrees, however, the opinion [or verdict] of the Jury came to be regarded as decisive; and the Judge merely "pronounced judgment," (as is done now) according to the Verdict.

So little do Historians dwell on those ordinary transactions of human life, which furnish the data from which the social progress of nations may be estimated, that this kind of information is introduced, for the most part, only incidentally and obliquely; and is to be collected, imperfectly, from scattered allusions. So that if you will give a rapid glance, for instance, at the history of these islands from the time of the Norman conquest to the present day, not only do we find little mention of the causes of social progress, but what we chiefly do read of is, the *counteracting* causes; viz., wars, revolutions, and disturbances of every kind. Now, if a ship had performed a voyage of 800 leagues, and the register of it contained an account chiefly of the contrary winds and currents, and made little mention of favourable

gales, we might well be at a loss to understand how she reached her destination, and might even be led into the mistake of supposing that the contrary winds had forwarded her in her course. Yet such is History. — It may be said to be the record of the impediments to social progress.

It has often occurred to me, that the Longevity of the Antediluvians may have been a special provision to meet the difficulty in the way of social progress, which in those early ages must have existed before the invention, and the *familiar use*, of writing had enabled each generation to record, for the use of the next, not only its discoveries, but its observations, and incomplete experiments. For the more you speculate on the probable origin of the various arts, which are the most universal among mankind, the more you will be struck with this consideration, that many of the commonest arts, and which appear the simplest, and require but a very humble degree of intelligence for their *exercise*, are yet such, that we must suppose various accidents to have occurred, and to have been noted — many observations to have been made, and combined — and many experiments to have been made, in order to their being originally invented. Even now that writing is in use, a single individual, if he live long enough to follow up a train of experiments, has a great advantage, in respect of discoveries, over a *succession* of individuals; because he will recollect, when the occasion arises, many of his former observations, and of the ideas that had occurred to his mind, which, at the time he had not thought worth recording. But previous to the use of writing, the advantage of being able to combine, in one's own person, the experience of several centuries, must have been of immense importance; and it was an advantage which the circumstances of the case seemed to require.

The absence of written records is, though a very important, rather a secondary, than a primary, obstacle, to any forward movement in a Community. It is one branch of that general characteristic of the Savage,—*improvidence*. If you suppose the case of a savage taught to read and write, but allowed to remain in all other respects, the same careless, thoughtless kind of Being, and afterwards left to himself, he would most likely forget his acquisition, and would certainly, by neglecting to teach it to his children, suffer it to be lost in the next generation. On the other hand,—if you conceive such a case — (which certainly is conceivable, and I am disposed to think it a real one :) as that of a people ignorant of this art, but acquiring in some degree a thoughtful and provident character, I have little doubt, that their desire, thence arising, to record permanently their Laws, practical maxims, and discoveries, would gradually lead them, first, to the use of memorial-verses ; and afterwards, to some kind of natural symbols, such as picture-writing, and the hieroglyphics ; which might gradually be still further improved into writing, properly so called.

We have no direct information as to the immediate cause of the great longevity of the earliest generations of men. But it seems likely it may have been produced by the influence of "*the Tree of Life ;*" a vestige of an early tradition respecting which appears in Homer, representing his gods as supporting perpetual life and vigour by drinking nectar, and *eating Ambrozia* (that is, immortality.)

That the produce of this tree, (whether its fruits or its leaves) was endued by the Creator with some property of warding off death, we are plainly taught, both by its name, and by the exclusion of Adam from the Garden of Eden, "lest he should eat of the tree of life, and live for ever."

It is likely that it had the medicinal virtue, when applied from time to time, of preventing, or curing, the decay of old age; just as our ordinary food preserves men from dying of exhaustion by famine; and as several well-known medicines prevent, or cure, certain diseases. We know indeed, that there does not exist now any medicine that has the virtue of keeping up, or renewing, youthful health or vigour. But such a medicine would not be, in itself, at all more strange than many things which we are familiar with, but whose effects we cannot explain, and could never have conjectured.

For example, that opium and some other drugs should produce sleep, and strong liquors, a kind of temporary madness, is what no one would ever have thought of, if he had never heard of it, nor seen the experiment tried of swallowing those substances. Nor, even if he were a skilful chemist, would he be able, by analysing them, to conjecture what their effects would be. If then the Tree of Life were such a medicine as we have supposed, a person who always continued the use of it, from time to time, would continue exempt from decay and death.

But supposing some persons, who had been in the habit of using it (as our first parents doubtless had, since there was nothing to prevent them) should afterwards *cease* to use it, their constitution would, probably, have been so far fortified, that though they would at length die, yet they would live much *longer* than man's natural term. And they would even be likely to transmit to their descendants such a constitution, as would confer on those, also, a great degree of longevity, which would only wear out gradually, in many successive generations.

Now it is remarkable, that this exactly agrees with what we do find recorded. If we look into those parts of the Bible history, which relate to this subject, we shall find

man's life, in the earliest generations, extending to eight or nine centuries, and upwards. And we shall find longevity gradually diminishing in each generation, down to the times of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who lived rather less than two hundred years; and again, down to the time of Moses, who began his mission apparently in the full vigour of life at four-score, and lived to one hundred and twenty. Joshua, who succeeded him, lived one hundred and ten years. And from thence forward, human life appears to have been brought down to about its present limit.

The above seems to be the most clear, easy, and natural interpretation of those parts of Scripture we have been examining. There is not, however, any such distinct revelation on the subject as to authorize our pronouncing confidently that such must be the right interpretation, and making this an article of faith.

The subject of Animal Instinct seems to form a point of contact between Natural History and the Philosophy of the Human Mind. And yet, beneficial and interesting as this circumstance alone might make this particular branch of study, a treatise upon Instinct is still a desideratum; something like a philosophic or systematic view of the subject — a distinct and satisfactory answer to the question; "What do you mean by Instinct?" — is still wanting. It seems, that however far advanced we may be in a *Dictionary* on the subject of Instinct, a *Grammar* is a thing very much wanted.

To say, as many are accustomed to do, that Brutes are actuated solely by Instinct, and Man by Reason, is contrary to the implied rule, that a Being is acting instinctively when impelled blindly towards some end which the Agent does not

aim at or perceive; and on the other hand, that it is acting rationally, when acting with a view to, and for the sake of, some end which it does perceive. For, as some things felt and done by Man are allowed to be purely instinctive — as hunger and thirst, for instance, are evidently instincts — so many things done by brutes, at least by the higher description of brutes, would be, if done by man, regarded as resulting from the exercise of Reason.

In many instances we know this is not the case. A man builds a house from Reason — a bird builds a nest from Instinct; and no one would say that the bird, in this acted from Reason. But in other instances, Man not only does the same things as the brutes, but does them from the same kind of impulse, which should be called instinctive, whether in man or brute. And again, several things are done by brutes, which are evidently not instinctive, but, to all appearance, no less rational than human acts: being not only the same actions, but done from the same impulse. The domestic animals exhibit many instances of this. There is an incident upon record, and there seems no ground for doubting it, of a dog, which being left on the bank of a river by his master who had gone up the river in a boat, attempted to join him. He plunged into the water, but not making allowance for the strength of the stream, which carried him considerably below the boat, he could not beat up against it. He landed, and made allowance for the current of the river, by leaping in at a place higher up. The combined action of the stream and his swimming, carried him in an oblique direction, and he thus reached the boat. I do not vouch for the accuracy of this anecdote; but I see no grounds for disbelieving it, as it is of a piece with many other recorded instances.

There is another instance of this nature, which did come

under my own observation, in which the actor was a cat — a species of animal generally considered very inferior in sagacity to a dog. This cat was known, not merely once or twice, but habitually, to ring the parlour-bell whenever it wished the door to be opened. Some alarm was excited on the first occasion that it turned bell-ringer. The family had retired to rest, and in the middle of the night the parlour-bell was rung violently: the sleepers were startled from their repose, and proceeded down stairs, with pokers and tongs, to intercept, as they thought, the predatory movements of some burglar; but they were agreeably surprised to discover that the bell had been rung by Pussy, who frequently repeated the act whenever she wanted to get out of the parlour.

Here are two clear cases of acts done by a cat and dog, which, if done by a man, would be called reason. Every one would admit that the actions were rational — not, to be sure, proceeding from a very high exertion of intellect: but the dog, at least, rationally jumped into the stream at a distance higher up from the boat into which he wished to get, because, having made the trial, and failed, he apparently judged from the failure of the first attempt, that his course was to go up the stream, make allowance for its strength, and thus gain the boat; he found that it would then carry him to it instead of from it; and the cat pulled the parlour-bell, because she had observed, that when it was rung by the family, the servant opened the door.

It appears, then, that we can neither deny Reason universally and altogether to brutes, nor Instinct to Man; but that each possesses a share of both, though in very different proportions. And yet the difference between man and brute, in respect of intelligence, appears plainly to be not a difference in mere *degree* but in *kind*. An intelligent brute is not like a stupid man. The intelligence and sagacity shown by

the elephant, monkey, and dog, are something very different from the lowest and most stupid of human beings.

In fact, in the most striking instances in which brutes display reason, all the intellectual operation seems to consist in the *combination of means to an end.* The dog who swam from a higher part of the river to reach the boat; the cat who rang the bell to call the servant; these, and many other similar instances of sagacity, appear to consist but in this.

But the great difference between Man and the higher brutes appears to me to consist in the power of using SIGNS —arbitrary signs—and employing *language as an instrument* of thought. We are accustomed to speak of language as useful to man, to *communicate* his thoughts. I consider this as only *one* of the uses of language. That use of language which, though commonly overlooked, is the most characteristic of Man, is an instrument of thought. Man is not the only animal that can make use of language to express what is passing within his mind, and that can understand, more or less, what is so expressed by another. Some brutes can be taught to utter, and many others, to understand, more or less imperfectly, sounds expressive of certain emotions. Every one knows that the dog understands the general drift of expressions used; and parrots can be taught not only to pronounce words, but to pronounce them with some consciousness of the general meaning of what they utter. They call for food; when displeased, scold; and use expressions in reference to particular persons which they have heard applied to them. Almost every animal which is capable of being tamed, can, in some degree, use language as an indication of what passes within. But no animal has the use of language as an "instrument of thought." Man makes use of GENERAL SIGNS in the application of his power of Abstrac-

tion, by which he is enabled to reason; and the use of arbitrary general signs, what logicians call "*common terms*," with a facility of thus using Abstraction at pleasure, is a characteristic of Man.

The implanting and modification of Instinct in animals, in consequence of the education received by many generations of their predecessors, is a point well worthy of inquiry. The most widely diffused of all implanted and modified Instincts is that of Wildness or Tameness. Whether the original Instinct of brutes was to be afraid of man, or familiar with him, I will not undertake to say. My own belief is that it is the *fear* of man that is the implanted instinct. But at any rate, it is plain that *either* the one or the other—wildness *or* tameness—must be implanted, and not an original, Instinct. All voyagers agree, that when they have gone into a country, which had not apparently been visited by man, neither bird nor beast exhibited fear. The birds perched familiarly upon their guns, or stood still to be knocked on the head. After the country had been for some time frequented, not only individual animals become afraid of man, but their offspring inherit that fear by Instinct.

There are many cases in which it cannot be ascertained towards what the immediate impulses of animals tend. We do not know through the medium of what organs birds are induced to put food into the mouths of their young. We see a pair of birds searching all day long for food; and, in many instances, the food they seek is such as they do not feed on themselves—for example, granivorous birds hunt after caterpillars for their young: in other cases they seek for food which their own appetite incites them to eat; but they treasure it for their young, and are impelled by an instinctive appetite to put it into its mouth when opened. And this

instinct is not peculiar to birds. The mammalia partake of it; for we find wolves, dogs, and other carnivorous animals bringing home meat, and leaving it before their young ones. If a bitch or wolf has pups, and cannot bring food to them otherwise than by first swallowing it, she swallows it, and then disgorges it; for the animal has the power of evacuating its stomach at pleasure. Pigeons invariably swallow their food before they give it to their young. — Take the case of migratory birds — even those which have been caged: when a particular season arrives, they desire to fly in a certain direction; but what leads them in that direction cannot be understood. That direction is pointed out to them by God; but how pointed out is only known to Him. And how delightful to a pious mind is it to contemplate every proof of the wisdom, goodness, and power of God — to mark everywhere the work of that same Creator's hand who has filled the universe with the monuments of His wisdom!*

There is a remarkable phenomenon connected with insect life which has often occurred to my mind while meditating on the subject of preparedness for a future state, as presenting a curious analogy.

Most persons know that every *butterfly* (the Greek name for which, it is remarkable, is the same that signifies also the *Soul*, — *Psyche*) comes from a grub or caterpillar; in the language of naturalists called a *larva*. The last name (which signifies literally a *mask*) was introduced by Linnæus, because the caterpillar is a kind of outward covering, or disguise, of the future butterfly within. For, it has been ascertained by curious microscopic examination, that a distinct butterfly,

* For proceedings of rational agents analogous to Instinct, see page 161.

only undeveloped and not full-grown, is contained within the body of the caterpillar; that this latter has its own organs of digestion, respiration, &c., suitable to its larva-life, quite distinct from, and independent of, the future butterfly which it encloses. When the proper period arrives, and the life of the insect, in this its first stage, is to close, it becomes what is called a Pupa, enclosed in a Chrysalis or Cocoon (often composed of silk; as is that of the silkworm which supplies us that important article), and lies torpid for a time within this natural coffin, from which it issues, at the proper period, as a perfect butterfly.

But sometimes this process is marred. There is a numerous tribe of insects well known to naturalists, called Ichneumon-flies; which in their larva-state are *parasitical;* that is, inhabit, and feed on, other larvæ. The Ichneumon-fly, being provided with a long sharp sting, which is in fact an *ovipositor* (egg-layer), pierces with this the body of a caterpillar in several places, and deposits her eggs which are there hatched, and feed, as grubs (larvæ) on the inward parts of their victim. —A most wonderful circumstance connected with this process is, that a caterpillar which has been thus attacked goes on feeding and apparently thriving quite as well during the whole of its larva-life, as those that have escaped. For, by a wonderful provision of instinct, the ichneumon-grubs within do not injure any of the organs of the larva, but feed only on the future butterly enclosed within it. And consequently, it is hardly possible to distinguish a caterpillar which has these enemies within it from those that are untouched.—But when the period arrives for the close of the larva-life, the difference appears. You may often observe the common cabbage-caterpillars retiring, to undergo their change, into some sheltered spot—such as the walls of a summer-house; and some of them—those that have escaped the parasites—

assuming the pupa-state, from which they emerge butterflies. Of the unfortunate caterpillar that has been preyed upon, nothing remains but an empty skin. The hidden butterfly has been secretly consumed. Now is there not something analogous to this wonderful phenomenon in the condition of some of our race: — may not a man have a kind of secret enemy within his own bosom, destroying his *Soul*,—*Psyche*, —though without interfering with his well-being *during the present stage* of his existence; and whose presence may never be detected till the time arrives when the *last great change* should take place? — Every man should reflect whether this may not be his case; remembering that it is in his power now, through the help that is promised, to detect and destroy these secret but deadly enemies within him!

The great difficulty is, not to make men *believe* in a future state of rewards and punishments, but to make them seriously and earnestly think about it: and this will be the hardest task in the case of those whose serious thoughts are taken up with worldly pursuits. There is more hope of converting a sensualist than an avaricious, or ambitious, calculating, worldly man. Accordingly, during the ministry of our Lord such men rejected Him whilst the publicans and sinners heard Him gladly. The voluptuary does very often heartily despise the whole world, and everything in it, his own pursuits included. One reason, indeed, for this may be, that *he* has *tried* the value of his own objects: whereas, those who are pursuing *distant* objects, are always likely to overrate them, from the dazzling colours in which hope decks them out.

Many a man, who may admit it to be impossible to serve God and Mammon, at one and the same time, yet wishes to

serve Mammon and God; first the one, as long as he is able; and then, the other.

There occurs in a late number of a leading Periodical a remark, which one may find also in the mouths of many, and in the minds of very many more; that the great diversity of religious opinions prevailing in the world, and the absence of all superhuman provision against them, is a proof that it is the *will* of the Almighty that such should be the case; — that men were *designed* to hold all diversities of religious belief. Now, the inference which will naturally be drawn, on further reflection, from this is, that it is no matter whether we hold truth or falsehood; and next, that there is *no* truth at all in *any* religion.

But this is not all. The same reasoning would go to prove that since there is no infallible and universally-accessible guide in *morals*, and men greatly differ in their judgments of what is morally right and wrong, hence we are to infer that God did not design men to agree on this point neither, and that it matters not whether we *act* on right or wrong principles; and, in short, that there is no such thing as right and wrong; but only what each man thinks. The two opposite errors (as we think them) from the *same source*, are, "If God wills all men to believe, and to act rightly, He must have given us an infallible and accessible guide for belief and practice. (1.) But he does so will; therefore, there is such a guide: and (2.) He has *not* given us any such guide: therefore, He does not will all men to believe and act rightly."

Now this is to confound the two senses of WILL, as distinguished in the concluding paragraph of the 17th Article of the Church of England. In a certain sense, the most absurd errors, and the most heinous crimes may be said to

be according to the Divine Will; since God does not interpose His omnipotence to prevent them. But "in our doings" says that Article, "that will of God is to be followed which we have *expressly* declared in Holy Writ."

Men only delude themselves by giving way to that craving after infallibility, which is part of our corrupt nature. — For it is plainly *not* God's intention to exempt us from all danger of mistake, and all labour of enquiry, and the responsibility of exercising our own judgments, whether good or bad, in matters of the greatest importance.

In all the most important affairs of this life, we are obliged to act upon mere probabilities, and sometimes, very weak probabilities. With respect to this life, as well as the life to come, our highest interests require us to act continually with regard to the future. Yet, we have no infallible guidance at all with respect to what will happen to-morrow. We are left to calculate, as we best can, what is most likely; and consider carefully what is, under all the circumstances, the most prudent course for us to take. Nay, it is very remarkable that our knowledge is much more full and complete of things which do *not* directly concern us, than of those which do. We can foretell the motions of the heavenly bodies for centuries to come; but, as to things at our own doors, we "know not what a day may bring forth." The things *within our foresight* and certain knowledge are *out of our power;* and the things *within our power are out of our foresight.*

It has been objected to Prayer that it is unnecessary, because God must know our wants, whether we supplicate Him or not. — True; He knows our wants, but not our humble supplications to Him for aid, unless we make such

supplications. Now, it is to our prayers, not to our wants, that His gifts are promised. He does not say "*Need*, and ye shall have; *want*, and ye shall find;" but, "*Ask*, and ye shall have; *seek*, and ye shall find."

A well-framed Liturgy in constant use, is not only a help to public worship, but a standing monitor, both to the Minister and his Congregation; the Minister, when he is reading it, testifying with his own mouth, against the errors, if such there be, of his own preaching; and the Congregation being warned either to supply what is wanting, or to reject what is faulty, or to inquire respecting what is doubtful.

That Infidelity is daily spreading, is a complaint one hears on all sides. It behoves every good Christian to look narrowly for the spring of that bitter stream which is welling fast, though often silently, all around us. Now, any one who considers the tendency of much of the teaching abroad in the present day to create and foster, irreligion, will see rather less reason to wonder at the amount of it that now exists, than ground for alarming apprehensions of its increase. — For, let a man be but once convinced — 1st, that Christianity cannot stand the test of enquiry;—2ndly, that he has no ground for certainty as to the real belief of those who teach it;—3rdly, that Scripture need not be studied; — 4thly, that he had better withdraw his thoughts as much as possible from the subject, since otherwise he could not but exercise that private judgment which is forbidden; — and 5thly, that Christianity is mainly a system of outward ordinances, — let him but adopt all these notions, and what is there to stand between him and Infidelity, or Indifferentism?

When men talk of the necessity of *accommodating* the religion preached by the Apostles to the tastes and manners

of men, they forget that the great aim of Christianity is to *regenerate* Man's Nature. Christianity does not (as the law of Moses did) *permit* things on account of the "hardness" of men's hearts; because it brings the promise of the Spirit, which is given to *change* our hearts, and make us "new creatures." Accordingly, though the Pagans in Italy were, in Paul's time, fond of altars and sacrifices, images, shows, and gaudy processions, that Apostle never thought of accommodating the simple worship of the Church to their tastes; and the Greeks at Corinth were quite as fond as the modern schoolmen of subtle and abstruse enquiries. Paul was so far from indulging them therein, that, for that very reason, he determined to "know nothing among them, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

The liberality of some men, is but indifference clad in the garb of candour.

Tenderness towards the faulty, is charity; tenderness towards the fault, is indifference about right and wrong.

If our religion is not true, we are bound to change it; if it is true, we are bound to propagate it.

The same kinds of error which at first were against the Christian religion, found their way into it afterwards, in corresponding corruptions of it.

It has been said that in former times, and *for* those times, Monasteries were commendable institutions. But those who say this, when contrasting the learning, peace, and piety of the Monasteries with the ignorance and irreligion and perpetual wars of "the Middle Ages," forget that it was the

very system of which these were a part, which *made* the world so dark and unquiet; and then, like the ivy, which has reduced a fine building to a shattered ruin, they held together the fragments of that ruin.

Nothing is really harmless that is *mistaken* for a virtue. In all pursuits, but most of all in the great one of religion, to think that we are advancing when we are not, is a positive evil.

Too religious, in the proper sense of the word, we cannot be. We cannot have the religious sentiments and principles too strong, or too deeply fixed, if only they have a right object. We cannot *love* God too warmly — or *honour* Him too highly — or strive to *serve* Him too earnestly — or *trust* Him too implicitly; because our duty is "to love Him with all our heart, and all our soul, and *all* our mind, and all our strength." But *too religious*, in another sense, we may, and are very apt to be—that is, we are very apt to make for ourselves too many *objects* of religious feeling.

The difference between religious knowledge, properly so called, and what may be more properly styled theological philosophy, may be thus illustrated. — The printed tables in our almanacks, showing the times of the sun's rising and setting at each period of the year — the appearances of the moon—the times of eclipses—the variations of the tides in different places, and the like, supply to plain unlearned men that needful information upon many points of daily practical use which they can understand; whereas, the explanations which modern discoveries in natural philosophy have established of most of those points, would be wholly unintelligible to them.—It is not the less possible, nor the less useful, for

any one to know the times when the sun gives light to this earth, even though he should not know whether it is the sun that moves, or the earth.

Now, it is just such practical knowledge as this that the Scriptures give us of the Christian Dispensation. — They afford practical directions, but no theory. But there is this important difference between the two cases — the human faculties could, and at length did (though it is beyond the great mass of mankind) discover the true theory of the appearances and motions of the heavenly bodies. In matters pertaining to divine revelation, on the contrary, though there must actually be a true theory (since there must *be* reasons, and those known to God Himself, even if hidden from every *creature*, why He proceeded in this way, rather than in that), this theory never can be *known* to us; because the whole subject is so far above the human powers, that we must have remained, but for revelation, in the darkest ignorance concerning it. Many curious and valuable truths has the world discovered by philosophy (or, as our translators express it, "wisdom"); but "the world" (says Paul,) "by wisdom knew not *God:*" of which assertion, the writings of the ancient heathen philosophers now extant, afford sufficient proof.

When the Sacred Writers speak with commendation of "knowing God," they always mean such a knowledge as is attended with the *practical effects* of fearing, loving and obeying Him. "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding" (Job. xxviii. 28). "He judged the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him: was not this *to know Me?* saith the Lord" (Jer. xxii. 16). "He that loveth is born of God, and *knoweth* God: he that loveth not *hath not known God*" (1 John iv. 7).

The Gospel substitutes for precise rules sublime principles; thus leaving the Christian to be "a law unto himself."

All lawgivers forbid us to *steal* our neighbour's goods; but it is only the Divine Law-Giver who looks, not merely on the outward appearance, but looks upon the heart, that can effectually forbid us to *covet* them.

All Gaming, since it implies a desire to profit at the expense of another, involves a breach of the tenth Commandment.

The King, who proposed a reward to the man who should invent a new pleasure, would have deserved well of the world, if he had stipulated that it should be innocent.

Much of the declamation, by which popular assemblies are often misled, against what is called, without any distinct meaning, the "doctrine of expediency," (as if the "right" and the "expedient" were in opposition) might be silenced by asking the simple question, "Do you then admit that the course you recommend is *in*expedient?"

To avoid the two opposite evils, — the liability to sudden and violent changes, and the adherence to established usage, when inconvenient or mischievous, — to give the requisite stability to governments and other institutions without shutting the door against improvement, this is a problem which both ancient and modern legislators have not well succeeded in solving. Some, like the ancient Medes and Persians, and like Lycurgus, have attempted to prohibit all change; but those who constantly appeal to the wisdom of their ancestors, as a sufficient reason for perpetuating every-

thing these have established, forget two things; first, that they cannot hope for ever to persuade all successive generations of men, that there was once one generation of such infallible wisdom as to be entitled to dictate to all their descendants for ever, so as to make the earth, in fact, the possession, not of the living but of the dead; and, secondly, that, even supposing our ancestors gifted with such infallibility, many cases must arise in which it may be reasonably doubted whether they themselves would not have advocated, if living, changes called for by altered circumstances; even as our own forefathers, who denoted the *southern* quarter from *meridies* (noon), would not have been so foolish as to retain that language had they come to live in this hemisphere, where the sun at noon is in the north.

Nature does not give the same degree of strength to the footstalks of the leaves of a tree,—destined as these are, to be shed every year, — and to the roots, which are designed to hold the trunk fast in the ground — If she did, either the one would be far too strong, or the other far too weak, or both of these inconveniences might take place at once; yet this is the error committed by almost all governments. The same machinery is provided to facilitate or to impede *every* change alike, in great or in small matters; the same mode is prescribed for the maintaining, or abrogating, or introducing of *every* law and *every* institution alike. In Great Britain, for instance, an Act for regulating the manufacture of soap, or an Act which should introduce a complete change into the Constitution—which should take away or restore the liberties of half the nation, — must go through exactly the same forms, and be passed or rejected by the same authorities under the same regulations: in short, in this respect, the Government is like a tree whose leaf-stalks and main roots,

have neither more nor less toughness and stoutness the one than the other.

A political prediction publicly uttered will often have had, or be supposed to have had, a great share in bringing about its own fulfilment. He who gives out, for instance, that the people will certainly be dissatisfied with such and such a law, is, in this, doing his utmost to *make* them dissatisfied. And this being the case in all unfavourable, as well as favourable, predictions, some men lose their deserved credit for political sagacity, through their fear of contributing to produce the evils they apprehend; while others, again, contribute to evil results by their incapacity to keep their anticipations locked up in their own bosoms, and by their dread of not obtaining deserved credit. It would be desirable to provide for such men a relief like that which the servant of King Midas found, due care, however, being taken that there should be no whispering reeds to divulge it.

To love both Power and Liberty is not very consistent.

In forming a judgment of any one's character, the first thing to be looked at, is to see whether he have any perceptible, ruling passion; for it is evident that, though the whole of a man's character does not depend upon it, since it may be variously modified by other passions, and by principle, yet it must ever be an important feature. A man might give a very full detail of the business and transactions of each separate department of our government, and yet convey but a faint idea of our Constitution, compared with one who should in a few lines point out the χυριον of it, and the checks upon that. So also, it is not enough to be able to enumerate a man's good and bad qualities, without adverting to his

ruling passion. It is a point of some nicety, since we are not to be led altogether by a man's conduct: for the same conduct is not only consistent with, but may spring from, different passions; nor by his professions, nor what his reason assents to; yet each of these, though it may not be precisely conformable to his ruling passion, will generally be, in some measure, tinged by it. Perhaps, one of the best criterions (when a man can, as in the case of himself, obtain knowledge of it) is his castles-in-the air. A reverie is, on the one hand, not regulated by the corrections of sober reason, and yet, on the other hand, is not usually influenced by the sudden interruption of those casual passions, which, in practice, so often interrupt a man's general plan of life; it is in a reverie, therefore, that the ruling passion bears the most complete sway. Some men's day-dreams *terminate* (for that is the main point) in glory; some, in power; some in beneficence; some stop short at wealth; some in comfort, and tranquil retirement. This last case seems to bear reference to a sort of negative ruling passion, which is by no means uncommon. It is generally easier, and better, to direct and modify the ruling passion, than to extirpate it; and there is scarce any that may not be engaged on the side of virtue: *Laudis amore times?* What is the praise of men compared with the praise of God? Is a man eager for knowledge? Heaven must be set before *him*, as the place where we shall "see face to face" and "know even as we are known" — Is he ambitious? Such an one may be made to be eager to rise to a more exalted state of existence — Is his ruling passion philanthropy? Heaven presents itself as a place where multitudes will be happy around him; and, especially, where the distressing and perplexing appearance of evil will be explained, and the Divine Benevolence clearly made manifest.

Abstain from the amusements, which are the most congenial to your peculiar, innate disposition, or your peculiar, professional pursuits. A man should never do that in jest, which he may be suspected of doing in earnest.

There is not so much pleasure in *gaining*, as in the *act* of gaining. — If all our wishes were gratified, most of our pleasures would be destroyed.

No flattery — to use the word in the sense of undue praise merely—has such influence as the daily droppings of domestic flattery. *Laudari a laudato viro*, is what every one would prize most; but other praises may make up in tale what they want in weight.

Attachment to Relations, is the earliest and the latest.

It is a fact, and a very curious one, that many people find they can best attend to any serious matter, when they are occupied with something else, that requires a little, and but a little, attention; such as, working with the needle (which, by the bye, gives the woman a great advantage over men), cutting open paper leaves, or for want of some such employment fiddling any how with the fingers (which most are prone to when earnestly engaged). Now, as the best philosophers are agreed, that the mind cannot actually attend to more than one thing at a time, but when it so appears, is, in reality, shifting with prodigious rapidity, backwards and forwards from one to the other, it seems strange, that attention to one train of ideas should be aided by this continual, though unperceived, distraction to another. The truth is, I conceive, that it is next to impossible to keep the mind closely fixed to any one train of thought, except for a very short

time; and that, when we suppose this to be the case, there are, in reality, continual little digressions; which frequently do not (often do) leave a trace on the memory; which are excited, either by some casual association with one of the ideas of the train, or by bodily sensations, and from which, the attention is continually returning to its former course. If any one first attends to any subject, as he thinks, exclusively, and afterwards beginning to cut open paper-leaves, finds that he attends no worse than before, it seems quite evident that he did not before attend *more exclusively* than after; and consequently that he had then, though he knew it not, his attention as much drawn off by extraneous objects. Taking it then for granted, that we seldom, or never, can prevent entirely those occasional wanderings of attention, and never can wholly confine our thoughts to the main object, the best way, therefore, must be to present to them some subordinate object, which shall be just interesting enough to withhold our attention from those objects, which our roving senses are perpetually apt to present to us, and yet not enough to draw off much of our attention (such as needlework, to one who is familiar with it, but not to a child who is just learning it): and this subordinate object will, not only, draw off our attention from the surrounding objects of sense, but will aso check those wandering thoughts which are suggested by the principal train of ideas; for being associated with this principal train, it will form a sort of topical memory, and will thus perpetually recall us to what we are about. Hence the great advantage of some such employment as needlework, turning, &c. Hence, too, though it is reckoned uncivil, when another is reading or speaking to you, to look out of the window, or play with a dog, as implying inattention, yet we should be aware, that it does not necessarily imply any such thing. Hence, too, the

chief advantage of meditating on paper; the act of writing withholds the attention; and the words written are more even than the above topical kind of memory, for they present to you the past part of the trains, first, in regular order; secondly, connected with them, not by an extemporaneous association, as above, but by an established and habitual one.

In Affliction, Labour and Duty have been found to have a soothing effect, when an attempt at seeking amusement would excite loathing.

If you wish to show how well you *would* undergo trials from which you are exempt, show it by your way of sustaining those to which you are subjected.

Gay Spirits are always spoken of as a sign of happiness, though every one knows to the contrary. A cockchafer is never so lively, as when a pin is stuck through his tail; and a hot floor makes Bruin dance.

Happiness is no *laughing* matter.

Disgust, contempt, and laughter are nearly akin; he who enjoys nothing and values nothing, will laugh at everything.

Of all secondary motives, there are, certainly, none that have more influence, on faith, and feeling, and practice, than the example and sympathy of others. Where indeed is the man, who can presume to say, that his faith would be equally firm, if no one held it beside himself? or that his feelings and his conduct would be the same, if he found that, in both, he stood perfectly single?

To take the same steps with another, in widely different circumstances, is to depart from, not to follow, his example.

It may be said, almost without qualification, that Wisdom consists in the *ready* and *accurate* perception of analogies. Without the former quality, knowledge of the past is uninstructive; without the latter, it is deceptive.

There is a kind of man, that may be called the *mirror* of a wise man; which gives a perfect representation, only *left-handed.* He knows that a wise man is neither too hasty nor too slow—too trustful nor too distrustful—keeps the mean between timidity and rashness, &c.; and so he resolves to have just enough, and not too much, of each quality;—only he takes the wrong occasions for each; cautious, where he ought to be bold, and daring, where he ought to be cautious; distrusting those worthy of confidence, and trusting those who are not; dilatory, where promptitude is called for, and hasty, where he should take time; obstinate, where concession would be right, and yielding, where firmness is needed; in short, acting like Hans with Grettel, who stuck a knife in his sleeve, because that was the proper place for the needle; and put a kid in his pocket, because that was the place for a knife, &c. Such is the left-handed representation of a wise man.

A man who, in conjunction with other qualities, is remarked for a simple and *natural* way of speaking and acting, and whose opinions and conduct are marked by independence and originality, will, perhaps, be admired and imitated by others, who forget that an imitation of one who is *no* imitator, must, in one most important point, be quite unlike; and that one who does *not* think for himself, must differ greatly from one who *does.*

People in general judge of every separate action as good or bad, and seem to have a very imperfect idea of *character*. Virtuous or vicious are terms not strictly applicable to any *action*, but to the agent, and his disposition and design, of which the acts are only the indicative. Thus, if a man be found guilty of a cool and deliberate falsehood, or of a designed malicious misrepresentation, and equivocation (which is a lie guarded), his good actions might, in other respects, be *beneficial;* but they no more deserve the name of virtuous, than the services of rooks in ridding the field of grubs, or of vultures in draining away carrion.

A lobster (and the same may be seen in a prawn) always *faces* you, as if ready to maintain his post, and do battle; but when you approach, he gives a flap with his tail, and flies back two or three feet; and so on, again and again; always showing his assailants a bold front, and always retreating.—I have met with many such *men*.

There are snakes as venomous as the rattle-snake, only they have no warning *rattle*.

There are some rare instances, and as curious as rare, of men who, from their youth up, have lost so little, and gained so little, that at any age, they are neither less nor more than clever boys, with all the mental and bodily elasticity of a lively youth, and with all the mental immaturity and unsteadiness of thought likewise. Their's is a perpetual spring-time, which keeps everything fresh and green, and ripens nothing.

"A knave is one knave, but a fool is many." A weak man, in a place of authority, will often do more mischief

than a bad man. For an intelligent, but dishonest man, will do only as much hurt as serves *his own* purpose; but a weak man is likely to be made the *tool* of several dishonest men. A lion only kills as many as will supply him with food; but a horse, if ridden by several warlike horsemen, may prove the death of more than ten lions would kill.

To attempt to convince some men by even the strongest reasons and most cogent arguments, would be like King Lear putting a letter before a man without eyes, and saying, "Mark but the penning of it;" to which he answers, "Were all the letters suns, I could not see one."

Some persons have an excessive dread of being misled by the eloquence of another. A man has been known to shun the acquaintance of another, of whom he knew no harm, solely from his dread of him as a man who, he imagined, "could prove anything." Men of a low tone of morality, judging from themselves, take for granted, that whoever "has a giant's strength will not scruple to use it like a giant."

It seems to be commonly taken for granted, that whenever the feelings are excited they are, of course, *over-excited*. Now, so far is this from being true — so far is it from being the fact — that men are universally, or even generally, in danger of being misled in conduct by an *excess* of feeling, that the reverse is, at least, as often the case. The more generous feeling, such as Compassion, Gratitude, Devotion, nay, even rational and *rightly-directed* Self-Love, Hope, and Fear, are oftener defective than excessive: and that, even in the estimation of the parties themselves, if they are well-principled, judicious, and candid, men. Do the feelings of

such a man, when contemplating, for instance, the doctrines and the promises of the Christian Religion, usually come up to the standard which he himself thinks reasonable? And not only in the case of Religion, but in many others also, a man will often wonder at, and be rather ashamed of, the coldness and languor of his own feelings, compared with what the occasion calls for: and even make efforts to rouse in himself such emotions as he is conscious his reason would approve. But the feelings, propensities, and sentiments of our nature, are not, like the Intellectual Faculties, under the direct control of Volition. The distinction is much the same as between the voluntary, and the involuntary, actions of different parts of the body. One may, by a deliberate act of the Will, set himself to calculate,—to reason,—to recall historical facts, &c., just as he does to move any of his limbs: on the other hand, a Volition to hope or fear, to love or hate, to feel devotion or pity, and the like, is as ineffectual as to will that the pulsations of the heart, or the secretions of the liver, should be altered. Good sense suggests, in each case, an analogous remedy. It is in vain to form a Will to quicken or lower the circulation; but we may, by a voluntary act, swallow a medicine which will have that effect; and so also, though we cannot, by a *direct* act of volition, excite or allay any Sentiment or Emotion, we may, by a voluntary act, fill the understanding with such thoughts as shall operate on the Feelings. Such being the state of the case, why is it that the idea of unfair artifice should be so commonly associated, not only with Rhetoric in general, but most especially with that part of it known as the address to the Feelings or Active Principles of our nature, and usually stigmatized as "An Appeal to the Passions instead of the Reason?"—though no other artifice is necessarily employed by the Orator than a man of sense makes use of towards

himself. Many different circumstances combine to produce this effect. In the first place, the intellectual powers being, as has been said, under the *immediate* control of the Will, which the Feelings, Sentiments, &c., are not, an address to the Understanding is consequently from the nature of the case, *direct;* to the Feelings, *indirect.* The conclusion you wish to draw, you may state plainly, as such; and avow your intention of producing reasons which shall effect a conviction of that conclusion: you may even entreat the hearer's steady attention to the point to be proved, and to the process of argument by which it is to be established. But this, for the reasons above mentioned, is widely different from the process by which we operate on the Feelings. No passion, sentiment, or emotion, is excited by *thinking about* it, and attention to it; but by thinking about, and attending to, such objects as are calculated to awaken it. Hence it is, that the more oblique and indirect process, which takes place when we are addressing ourselves to this part of the human mind, is apt to suggest the idea of trick and artifice; although it is, as I have said, just such as a wise man practises towards himself.

When, however, it is said, that a good and wise man often has to act the part of an orator towards himself, in respect of that very point — the excitement of the Feelings — it must not be forgotten that there is danger of a man's being misled by his own ingenuity — of exercising on himself, when under the influence of some passion, a most pernicious oratorical power, by pleading the cause, as it were, before himself, of that passion. And the man of *superior ingenuity* and eloquence, will do this more skilfully than an ordinary man, and will thence be likely to be the more effectually self-deceived: for though he may be superior to the other in judgment, as well as in ingenuity, it is to be remembered

that, while his *judgment* is likely to be, in his own cause, biassed and partially blinded, his ingenuity is called forth to the utmost; and though it requires greater skill to mislead him than an ordinary man, he himself possesses that superior skill. It is no feeble blow that will destroy a giant; but if a giant resolve to kill himself, it is a giant that deals the blow.

The like takes place if it be anger, selfish cupidity, unjust partiality in favour of a relative or friend, party-spirit, or any other passion, that may be operating. For, universally, men are but too apt to take more pains in justifying their propensities than it would cost to control them; and a man of superior powers will often be, in this way, entrapped by his own ingenuity, like a spider entangled in the web she has herself spun. There is no one whom he is likely so much, and so hurtfully, to mislead as himself, if he be not sedulously on his guard against this self-deceit.

If a man, who feels himself capable of generous and exalted conduct (I do not mean, feels that he shall always act thus, — for who dares promise himself this? — but who feels that it is not beyond his conception, or unnatural to him), measures others by his own standard, he must be first disappointed, and then dissatisfied, with almost all the world; and if he then comes to measure himself by their standard, and to be content with coming up to it, it is evident he will act below what he is capable of, and what is consequently expected of him; for every man shall be judged "according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not." His only way, then, is to fancy himself the only generous being in the world. I say to *fancy*, because there is no reason he should not *believe* in the abstract, that there are others; but he should never expect it, in any one instance,

till it has been most copiously and clearly proved by experience. It may be objected that this will make him think over-highly of himself, and "despise others." I deny both—for he is not to think his *conduct* better than others, only his *capabilities;* and thus, feeling that more is required of him, as being placed in a higher walk of duty, he will even be the less satisfied with his conformity to so lofty a standard. But, though his frequent failures will humble him, yet, as a fair and due sense of dignity, which arises from a consciousness of superior station, is not only right, but needful, in a gentleman, a peer or a king, to make them fill their stations gracefully; so it is here: that proper sense of his own moral dignity, is necessary for a great and generous disposition, if he would act up to his character. The excess thereof will be checked by habits of true piety, which cannot but make him feel his own littleness, in the strongest manner; and by continually asking himself "Who made thee to differ from another?" or, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" he will be guarded against despising his inferiors. For generous and ungenerous pride are, not only different (as all would allow), but, in most points, opposite; a man of the former character makes allowances for others, which he will not make for himself; the latter, allowances for himself, which he will not for others: he is ready enough to think that this, and that, is not good enough for him; but the other thinks a *base action* not good enough for him, and does not regard his superiority as a privilege to act in a manner which, in his view, would degrade him from it; and while doing the most generous actions himself, as things of course, he will make the readiest allowance for others' deficiencies. He will do good without calculating upon much gratitude; yet will be grateful, with most generous ardour, himself. To take any unfair advantages, or even to take *all* fair ones—to press

his rights to the utmost—to press close to the limits of what is wrong, and anxiously consider whether he may be *allowed* to do this, or omit that,—he disdains and would feel degraded by it.

Some men are so excessively acute at detecting imperfections, that they scarcely notice excellencies. In looking at a peacock's train, they would fix on every spot where the feathers were worn, or the colours faded, and see nothing else.

Men, in general, are apt to consider him as the wisest who professes to explain the most; and him as the most ignorant who is the most ready to confess his ignorance.

Those who are *ambitious* of originality, and aim at it, are necessarily *led by others*, since they seek to be *different* from them.

There is many a *rashly-cautious* man. A moth rushes into a flame, and a horse obstinately stands still in a stable on fire; and both are burnt. Some men are prone to moth-rashness, and some to horse-rashness, and some to both.

The generality of readers give a man credit for as much, and only as much, superiority as he assumes; and conclude anything to be contemptible which they see treated with great contempt; unless indeed that the writer assures his readers over and over again, and with strong observations, that a work is utterly contemptible. In this case they begin, at least sometimes, to suspect that it is not. This is like some of the over-done bulletins which annihilate a corps of the enemy to-day, and then rout them again to-morrow, and then

again announce a third victory over them next day, till at last people begin to doubt whether they have gained any victory at all.

One sometimes meets with an "ill-used man;" a man with whom everything goes wrong; who is always thinking how happy he should be to exchange his present wretched situation for such and such another; and when he has obtained it, finding that he is far worse off than before, and seeking a remove; and as soon as he has obtained that, discovering that his last situation was just the thing for him, and was beginning to open to him a prospect of unbroken happiness, far beyond his present state, &c. To him a verse of Shakspeare well applies:—

> ——— "O thoughts of men accurst!
> Past, and to come, seem best, things present worst."

One is reminded of a man travelling in the African desert surrounded by mirage, with a (seeming) lake behind him, and a lake before him, which, when he has reached, he finds to be still the same barren and scorching sand. A friend aptly remarked "that man's happiness has no present tense."

If a thing is right to be done, it must be right that somebody should do it. Is there any reason why I should not be that somebody?

There may be great faults in reference to small things.

The peculiarities of women dawn at so very early an age, and are so much less variable than their education, that I cannot believe them to be entirely, or even chiefly, artificial. Even their education itself, is, in a great degree, to be traced

up to nature; for, if Eve had the education of her own daughters, they would, of course, learn to think, feel, and act as she had been taught by *nature*, and so on.

It may be affirmed as a general rule, that women have much less totality than men.

Woman is like the reed, which bends to every breeze, but breaks not in the tempest.

Shakspeare has, I think, in great measure reversed the male and female characters in Macbeth and his wife. *He* is readily open to the impressions of fear, pity, remorse, &c., and yet bears up against them to the *last*. *She* is unmoved, and when she does at length feel, she *dies of it*.

Mushroom-celebrity is the result of puzzle-headedness. A man hardly can rise to *very sudden popularity* without being (along with some cleverness), somewhat puzzle-headed. For the way to rise to rapid celebrity is to be a plausible advocate of *prevailing* doctrines; and especially to defend, with some eloquence and novelty, something which men like to believe, but have no good reason for believing. And this a skilful *dissembler* will never do so well as one who is himself the dupe of his own fallacies, and brings them forward, therefore, with an air of simple earnestness which implies his being, with whatever ingenuity and eloquence, puzzle-headed. A very clear-headed man must always perceive some of the truths which are generally overlooked, and must have detected some of the popular fallacies; in short, he must be somewhat *in advance* of the οἱ πολλοί of his contemporaries: and if he has the courage to speak his mind fairly, he must wait till the next generation, at least, for his popularity.

The fame of clever, but puzzle-headed, advocates of vulgar errors will be like a mushroom which springs up in a night and rots in a day; while that of the clear-headed lover of truth will be a tree "*seris factura nepotibus umbram.*" He must take his chance for the result. If he is wrong in the doctrines he maintains, or the measures he proposes, at least it is not for the sake of immediate popular favour. If he is right, it will be found out in time, though perhaps not in *his* time. The preparers of the *Mummies* were (Herodotus says) *driven out of the house*, by the family who had engaged their services, with execrations and stones; but their *work* remains sound after three thousand years.

If human nature were not, always and everywhere, in the most important points, substantially the same, history could furnish no instruction; if men's manners and conduct, circumstantially and externally, were not infinitely varied in various times and regions, hardly any one could fail to profit by that instruction. As it is, much diligence is called for in recognizing, as it were, the same plant in different stages of its growth, and in all the varieties resulting from climate and culture, soil and season.

The use of estimating rightly the temptations of others, is in order the better to understand our own. If we look only to the mote in our brother's eye, no improvement in knowledge can answer any purpose but to increase our condemnation.

When the sun's rays are let into a room, clouds of dust will be seen floating in the air which before were unseen, and various stains and spots will appear, which were before unnoticed. So it is with the spiritual and moral light of the

Gospel, by which, as the conscience becomes more tender, more vigilant, and better regulated, we shall be given increased insight into our own defects

The distinct uses of Scripture, in all that relates to morals, and of natural conscience, may be illustrated by the comparison of a sun-dial and a clock. The clock has the advantage of being always at hand to be consulted at any hour of the day or night. But then the clock is liable to go wrong, and vary from the true time. And it has no power in itself of correcting its own errors, so that these may go on increasing to any extent, unless it be from time to time regulated by the dial, which is alone the unerring guide. Thus our consciences are liable to deceive us even to the greatest extent, or to give wrong judgment, if they are not continually corrected and regulated by a reference to the Word of God, which alone — like his Sun in the natural world—affords an infallible guide. But while professing to take Scripture as such a guide, we should beware, when we consult it, of acting like a man who should pretend to regulate his clocks and watches by the sun-dial, and should go to it in the night-time with a candle which would throw the shadow whichever way he would.

All virtuous actions are actions of the mind. From overlooking the truth, so obvious when stated, that outward actions are only so far morally good or evil as they are a sign of what is within. Casuists, in particular, have often fallen into hurtful errors by distinguishing venial from mortal sins, according to the amount, for instance, of money stolen or the like, rather than according to the disposition of the agent. Indeed so irregularly and promiscuously introduced, in general, are the philosophical and popular senses of the

words "moral and immoral, vicious and virtuous," that while every one would allow modesty, gentleness, liberality, &c., to be "moral virtues;" yet a man would not usually be said to lead an *immoral* life, who was clear of all offences against the laws, and also chaste and temperate; though he might indulge the worldly, and the more truly diabolical propensities, such as covetousness, vanity, falsehood, arrogance, envy, malice and cruelty.

The very definition of a *moral* duty *implies* its universal obligation, independent of all *enactment*. A positive precept concerns a thing that is right because commanded; a moral precept respects a thing commanded because it is right. A Jew, for instance, was bound both to honour his parents, and also to worship at Jerusalem, but the former was *commanded* because it was right; and the latter was right *because* it was commanded.

Some persons seem to submit to the laws of their country in the same manner as they do to the changes of the seasons, and the rising and setting of the sun, merely because they cannot help it; and not as any part of religious and moral duty; notwithstanding the commands so forcibly laid down in Scripture to "be subject to the powers that be, as ordained of God; not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake."

The king is entitled to *more obedience* than a justice of the peace, but is not *more entitled* to obedience. For we are to "submit ourselves to *every* ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." If you owe five pence to one man, and five pounds to another, you are *equally bound* to pay both debts, though the *debts* themselves are not equal.

Right and Obligation must be reciprocal; whatever the lawful magistrate has a *right* to *enjoin*, the subject *must* be *bound to obey*.

It is remarkable that two opposite extremes with respect to Law, are sometimes found in the same person: the one is the extreme of not regarding obedience to it as a duty, of not regarding anything as right because commanded, or wrong because forbidden; and the other is the extreme of regarding it as the *whole* duty, of looking only to what is commanded and forbidden by law, from a persuasion that in any proceeding allowed by law there can be nothing morally wrong. At one time, if it suits his convenience to infringe positive regulations, he will plead the law of nature, and urge, for instance, that wild animals are the natural property of any one who can seize them; or that all men have a natural right to import whatever goods they please, without making any payment, except to the seller; and that though the law has limited these rights, and guarded the limitation by penalties, yet if he chooses to risk the penalty, he is doing nothing morally wrong: forgetting that whatever property he possesses is his by the law of the land and by nothing else: and yet at another time, perhaps the same man, when pressing his legal rights to the most unfair extreme, will justify his hard dealing by urging that he does nothing contrary to law.

Of all abuses of law, the greatest and most pernicious, because to it all the rest may generally be referred, is the setting up of the laws as a system of morality, and making them the guide of our conscience, which a law never can be. And for these reasons: 1st, it omits whatever is not an object of compulsion, and whatever cannot be clearly defined; 2nd, its punishments are not proportioned to the

moral guilt of offences; 3rd, it looks only to the outward action, not to the heart. This error is the more dangerous, because there is so much of truth incorporated with it. It is certainly true, that we ought to do what the law enjoins; and hence the mistake of supposing that this is sufficient, though we do nothing more. It is true, that we ought not to do what the laws forbid; the error is in reckoning everything right that is not forbidden by them, and everything that *is*, as wrong in exact proportion, to the punishment they denounce against it.

Men are apt to think, that because the *mode* and *occasion* of *undefined* duties, such as contribution to charitable objects, are left to their discretion, it is therefore left to their choice to practise them or not. They seem to think, that he who is responsible only to God, has no responsibility at all.

Christian motive *makes* (so to speak) duties of the most ordinary actions of life, as done "unto the Lord and not unto man;" even of those which, done on worldly motives by worldly men, would have nothing virtuous in them. "Whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he does all to the glory of God."

A life cannot be said to be a Christian life that does not spring from Christian faith and Christian principle, any more than brute animals can be called religious, though conforming to the design of their Maker, and acting suitably to the nature with which He has endowed them. No one would commend a machine for industry because it is in perpetual motion; or a torrent for courage because it rushes impetuously along.

It is not enough that the faith should be sound and the conduct right also, unless that conduct be made to arise *out of* that faith. It is not enough that the inward works of a clock are well-constructed, and also the dial-plate and hands; the one must act on the other; the works must regulate the movements of the hands.

The Christian serves the only Master who takes the effort alone for the deed.

A son who loves his father so well as to be ready to die for him, is as truly loving a child as he who actually dies for his parent; and he that is ready to forsake all for Christ, is as dear to Christ, as if he had actually forsaken all for Him.

So far from any good works being intrinsically *meritorious*, there are none that can be even intrinsically *virtuous*. To be acceptable in God's sight, they must be "the fruits of the Spirit," the fruits of the branches which grow on "the True Vine," without whom we can do nothing. The branch cannot boast itself independent of the vine, even Christ, on whose body we are engrafted through faith, and by whom we are enabled to bring forth fruit.

The absurdity involved in the idea of being religious by proxy — of having good works done for us — would be obvious, if men would remember that our divine Master can have no need of the services of his creatures. "Can a man," asks Job, "be profitable unto God, as a man that is wise may be profitable unto himself? . . . . or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect." The good works, therefore, which he requires of us must be entirely for our own

benefit, and not for His, and designed as a training and exercise in order to our moral improvement. This distinction between works required for their *own value* to the requirer, and those which are required for the exercise of a learner, is very obvious: for instance, if I offer a map for *sale*, it is nothing to any one whether I draw it myself, or get *another* to do it *for me*, provided the map is a good one; but if a schoolmaster sets a boy to draw a map, he would punish him for getting another boy to do it for him; because he values the map merely for the pupil's proficiency, as he could draw a better map himself, or buy it at a shop. Now as there can be no doubt that this latter case answers to ours in reference to our Divine Master, it must be a mere groundless fancy to think that another person can perform our duty for us, or that his good works, real or supposed, can be imputed to us, and considered as done by ourselves.

Though a man may go beyond what is required of some *other* men, no one can go beyond his *own* duty. It is plain, therefore, that no human virtue can have merit in God's sight, or any natural claim to reward.

Some persons have fallen into perplexity and mistake on the subject of the rewards promised in Scripture, and the merit which some suppose good works to possess in God's sight. An illustration from the case of a school will serve to explain it. Suppose, for instance, some rich and liberal man should found a school for the children of his poor neighbours; and suppose that besides building a school-house, and providing teachers and school-books, he should also provide prizes for such of the scholars as should behave well, and make good proficiency in their learning. Every one would understand that the children and their parents ought

to be very grateful to such a patron for his kind bounty. And the children would easily be made to understand that they ought to show their thankfulness by taking pains to profit by the advantages afforded them. And when it was said that these prizes were to be the reward of good behaviour, no one would be so stupid as to think that those who gained them could claim them as something *earned* by themselves, as a matter of right, and for which they owed no thanks to any one. All would understand that the *proposing* of the prizes was from the free bounty of the kind patron; and that the proficiency in learning of the children thus rewarded was no benefit to *him*, but only to them; and that it was entirely for *their* sakes that they were encouraged to take pains in learning. But they would fully calculate on receiving the promised rewards in case of good conduct; though not as what they had originally any claim to, but *because* it had been *promised*. For though the offer of the prize came from the patron's free bounty, the *fulfilment* of a promise once made is a matter of justice.

And accordingly we read that God is not unrighteous (unjust) to forget our work or labour of love, not that He was originally bound in justice to reward any good works of ours, or that they can be a benefit to Him, but because He has graciously promised to be a "rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." The *offer* of a reward to any of his creatures is a free *gift* of his bounty, but we may trust to his justice to make good what He has said.

If you could imagine the patron of a school such as we have been describing, to have supplied to the children not only a school-room, and teachers, and books, but also the eyes with which they read the books, and the ears with which they hear what is said to them, and the brain by which they understand it, then the case would answer more closely to that of our-

selves in reference to our Maker, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being." For He has supplied to us all our powers of mind and body, and He requires us, as He certainly has a full right to do, to employ them in devoting ourselves to His service. And He has held out to us the promise of the prize of our high calling, the "crown of glory which the Lord the *righteous* Judge shall give at that day unto all that love his appearing."

To this we could have no natural claim; and though we may fully rely on His justice for the fulfilment of his promises, all that we can receive from Him is not the less a free and bountiful gift, since the promises themselves proceed from His bounty alone.

Some Christians admire giving up something, under the notion of its being for Christ, when they are not called upon to give it up; which is just as if a son were, without any reason in the world, to stab himself in order to show his affection for his father.—This is a theatric kind of perfection, of which the Apostles knew nothing.

Sufferings are only really admirable when God's providence *calls* us to undergo them in the path of duty. But men are apt to forget this, and to confound together the thought of *merit* and of *pain*, because they see the two things often joined together; and when for no good reason at all, they inflict suffering on themselves, they think they are imitating Paul, forgetting that it was forced upon him. When our Lord says, "Let him take up his cross and follow me," He draws His metaphor from the Roman custom of condemning criminals to carry their own cross, and would teach His disciples to endure patiently whatever sufferings may be *laid on them* in their Christian course. The precept is not, it

should be observed, "Let him bear a cross" or "the cross," but *his* cross, *i. e.*, that which is *allotted* to him. So also in the parable of a man going to build, and of a king about to make war, and who do not fail, if they are prudent, to count the cost beforehand, we may observe that the *cost* to be computed is the *unavoidable* expense of the undertaking. They do not regard the expenditure as a thing desirable in itself, and to be sought on its own account, or incurred unnecessarily; but they consider how much it is *requisite* to sacrifice in order to accomplish the object.

And the very *strength* of some of our Lord's expressions, the hyperbolical and paradoxical form which they often assume, serves, and was doubtless designed to serve, the purpose (in this, as in many other cases) of guarding us against mistaking his meaning. If He had bid us merely "hate" riches, and ease, and comfort, He might have been understood to mean that Christians would be the more acceptable to Him for renouncing private property and exposing their bodies to the sufferings of cold and hunger, and scourging themselves with knotted cords according to the 'discipline' (as it is called) of some fanatic, or, like the Hindoos of this day, plunging into their flesh iron hooks, by which they are suspended and violently swung round. But when He says that a man must "hate his father and mother," and all those to whom duty as well as affection most bind him, "yea, and his own life also," we plainly see, since He evidently could not have been enjoining both *unnatural cruelty* and *suicide*, that He must have been inculcating the duty of being ready to sacrifice our strongest attachments, when *called on* to do so *in his cause*, when regard for friends, or love of life, shall stand in the way of our devotedness to Him,—when, as it would often happen in the times of persecution, a man was obliged to make choice between the two,

and renounce either the Gospel or the most valued good of this life and life itself.

And fully did the Apostles act up to the spirit of their Lord's instructions, ready to "pluck out the eye," or "cut off the hand," *if* it "offend," but not otherwise; ready each to bear his cross — *his own* cross — the burden of affliction which Providence might see fit should be laid on him: but no other. We find them, in their Christian warfare, acting the part of good and faithful soldiers; whose duty is to endure cheerfully hardship and toil, to brave wounds and death, when *summoned* to do so in the course of service,— to shrink from nothing that they are *commanded* to do or to bear; but never to expose themselves wantonly to danger when *not* commanded, nor to inflict on themselves, merely in ostentation of their fortitude, any sufferings or privations that have no other object.

The word "mortify," in our ordinary language, is commonly applied to any kind of suffering, simply *as suffering;* in which sense, either scanty or unpleasant food, or lying on a bed of stones, scourging, wearing of hair-cloth, or any gratutitous endurance of pain, would be called mortification. But the word mortify originally signifies—as well as the two Greek words of which it is a translation—to "put to death." And it is invariably used by the Sacred Writers (doubtless in allusion to the *death* of Christ for his people, whom He came to "save from their sins") in the sense of suppressing and subduing sinful propensities, and bringing the body into subjection to the Spirit. For instance, "Mortify your members which are upon the earth," "If ye through the Spirit do *mortify* the deeds of the body, ye shall live." And in the same sense, "They that are Christ's have *crucified* the flesh with its affections and lusts."

That the "fastings" of which Paul speaks in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (xi. 27) is an involuntary act, and not any kind of religious exercise, is plain from the context; as he is manifestly enumerating, not his devotional practices, but his hardships and trials. His "fastings" are mentioned not along with prayers and meditations, but with "perils," and "stripes," and "stoning." And it is observable also, that the "watchings" which he likewise mentions in the same place, have no reference to any sort of *voluntary* exercise. In our version, indeed, the word corresponds with that in our Lord's exhortation to "watch and pray;" but in the original, quite different words are employed. In the exhortation, to watch (γρηγορεῖν) is to be *vigilant* like a sentinel; in Paul's descriptions of his sufferings; "watching" (αγρυπνία) means "privation of sleep," "want of repose." And the same words are employed in the same manner, when he speaks in another place of being "in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in *watchings*, in *fastings*.'

It is evident that self-discipline, the bringing the body into subjection to the spirit, was not regarded by our Lord as the legitimate purpose of "fasting," (a notion which did not arise till several ages after;) for in *that* point of view the disciples would have needed it while their Lord was with them as well as afterwards; and thus, his reply to the reproachful enquiry why his disciples did not practise fasting, — "Can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?"—would have been nothing to the purpose. The next clause, "When the bridegroom is taken away, then shall they fast," contains no precept as to what his disciples were *enjoined* to do; only a prophecy of what would take place in the days when to mourn would be,—not indeed a thing *commanded*, but natural and suitable for

Christ's disciples. Those days were the interval of despondingsorrow between his crucifixion and resurrection, and not, as some have thought, the life of hardship and privation and suffering which awaited them; for these were a kind of trial which he prepared them not to mourn for, but to endure joyfully, "Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you for righteousness sake . . . . rejoice in that day, and leap for joy." And well did the Apostles learn and practise, and inculcate on their converts, the lesson He had taught them. "My brethren, count it all *joy* when ye fall into divers temptations;" that is, trials by persecution. "They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer them for his sake." "I am filled," says Paul, "with comfort; I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation."

That class of superstitious practices, painful sufferings, voluntarily undergone, — such as fasting, scourging, watching, filthy dress, or nakedness, — springs, partly from the tendency to confound merit with pain, and that which is, in some cases, a *mark* of true piety, with true piety itself; and partly from such sufferings being regarded as necessary to atone for sin. We are naturally averse from the company of God; not only because we are unlike Him, but because we feel that we have offended Him, and may expect *punishment.* Conscience not only upbraids us for what we do amiss, but — to use the words of Bishop Butler,—"if not forcibly stopped naturally, and always, of course, goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own." Hence we find that, among the very heathens, there was in wicked men often a keen sense of having deserved vengeance, and a vague solicitous looking round, as it were, of the mind in every direction, expecting that, from some point or other, vengeance would assuredly

overtake them; and a starting at every unlucky accident, as if it were "a judgment for their sins." This notion of something being wanted to appease the wrath of heaven for past transgressions, as distinct from reformation for the time to come, is probably one great source of the immorality of the heathen religions. Men's thoughts were turned away from reformation for the future to atonement for the past. The anger of the higher powers, *already incurred*, was the foremost thought, and the means of averting *that* were the great object of anxiety. Now it is quite true (as we know from revelation), that, though the good and merciful God cannot thirst for revenge like the weakest of His creatures, yet there was something more required than mere repentance on our part; not indeed to make us objects of God's mercy, for that we were when He *gave* his Son to die for us, but to make it wise and just for Him to treat us with favour as his dear children. But the mischief was, that men's minds fixed themselves almost wholly on that *something more;* and, pursued by a continual dread of punishment, they sought, by self-inflicted penances and hardships, or costly offerings and sacrifices, to *satisfy* the divine justice. The issue was, that religion came to wear the shape of a plan for tolerating vice at the expense of paying certain fines, and suffering certain penalties; and this will be, in the end, the shape of any religion which regards sin as something still to be *atoned for* by man himself, in the practice of rites different from ordinary right conduct. Christianity met the difficulty by teaching us that an *atonement* has been made; but an atonement in making which *we* have no share. It tells us that sin (considered as an obstacle to full pardon on repentance), has been so for ever *put away*, as that *nothing* remains for us to do, but to accept the offer of eternal life by turning to God; and knowing now that our "labour is not in vain in

the Lord," set ourselves, with his help, to that practice of virtue which is, and must be at all times our duty, and without which we "shall never see God." And the only *pain* God requires us to undergo, not as an *atonement* for sin, but as a natural *consequence* of it, is, the pain and toil which a man has to undergo in *reforming* his life, a pain and toil which will always be the *greater* the more sinful his life has been, and the longer he has continued in sin. Hence it leads us to regard the sufferings of this mortal life, not as vengeance taken on our sins, but as fatherly corrections, and a painful discipline necessary for our improvement; in which "God dealeth with us as with children; for what son is he whom his father chasteneth not?"

Christian self-denial consists, not in volunteering self-torture, but in "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts," and in "living" (not at this or that particular season, but always) "soberly, righteously and godly in this present life." For he who is a Christian at all must be one *constantly;* because he is, as such, a living stone of the temple of the Holy Ghost, and should therefore live — not on this day or that, but every day—as becomes those who are preparing for the coming of Him "who shall change our vile body, that it may be made like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto himself," and who, "having this hope," strive to "purify themselves, even as He is pure."

But though this is plainly the teaching of Christ and his Apostles, yet it is well known how much, and how soon, Christians of later ages perverted their teaching, and departed from their example. Early introduced, and widely spread, and hard to be eradicated, and easily revived, is the notion of a man's becoming, by a presumptuous "will-wor-

ship," by performance of supposed services that have not been enjoined — a sort of saviour to himself; or of atoning, himself, for his own, and even for his neighbours' sins. And the introduction of such notions and practices into the Gospel, *contrary* to its original and proper character, shows, more plainly even than the instances of the Pagan religions, how suitable to the "natural man" is this kind of will-worship. It appears everywhere—in corrupted Christianity, and in all the forms of heathenism in ancient and in modern times. The notion, evidently, is not derived either from Christianity as such, or from Mahometanism, or from Paganism, or from any particular form of Paganism; but from some tendency in human nature itself.

Since the two, seemingly most opposite, tendencies, a desire for temporal victory, glory, wealth, and enjoyment; and the other much more strange tendency, a craving for self-torture, are natural to man; since the two apparently most opposite desires — that for worldly success, complete self-indulgence, and freedom from moral restraint; and that for ascetic mortification, are found to exist in human nature; one might expect that any one teaching a religion either invented or modified by man, would have been likely to accommodate himself to these dispositions of the human mind. A superstitious enthusiast or a designing impostor, would have led his zealous followers to expect temporal success as a mark of divine favour (as was done by Mahomet, who was probably a mixture of the two characters); and allowed to them a relaxation of moral obligation; or he would have recommended *self-inflicted sufferings* as a laudable service of God, or most likely *combined both;* promising them, along with the consolations of piety, the free gratification of their natural desires; by permitting them to com-

pensate, by austerities at particular seasons, for habitual self-indulgence at other times. Jesus, on the contrary, does *neither*. He laboured to repress all expectations of worldly prosperity, and held forth the prospect of persecutions and hardships. He allows of no exemption from moral duty, no shrinking from dangers and sufferings to be encountered *in his cause;* no refusal to bear the cross that may be *allotted* to each; and yet never enjoins or encourages any self-inflicted pain, or needless exposure to danger. His religion, therefore, as taught by Himself, differs in a most important point from any that ever was devised by men; or mixed, and modified, and corrupted with human inventions. And this is one of the proofs open to any man of plain common sense, which may furnish an answer to the question, "Was it from heaven, or of men?"

The danger is not only so great, but likewise so palpable, of giving way to intemperance or to luxurious self-indulgence, that many are apt to disbelieve or overlook all danger on the side of asceticism, and consider *that* as being, at the worst, no more than a harmless error, leading to no evil beyond the unnecessary bodily suffering undergone; as something superfluous, but no wise mischievous. But, in truth, whatever is practised and admired as a Christian duty, when it is none, is likely to be worse than useless. While the practice of any truly Christian virtue tends to cherish every other Christian virtue, purifying and elevating the moral taste, and Christianizing the whole character, because the genuine "fruits of the spirit" all come from the same root; the practice, on the contrary, of any spurious imitation of virtue, is more likely to be *substituted* for general Christian morality than to prove a help towards it; and thus gradually to debase, instead of exalting, the character. Every superstition tends,

as far it goes, to divert religious sentiments into a wrong channel.

True Christian sanctity is not the sanctity which shows itself in self-inflicted mortification or outward signs of humility, or in the pomp and splendour of ceremonies. It is that sanctity which consists in the sober and consistent practice of Christian morals — that real virtue which is "comely, honest, and of good report," always and everywhere — that "moderation" which uses this world without abusing it," which is ready to sacrifice *all* when duty requires it; but is not afraid temperately to enjoy what God gives richly,—that sanctity which consists in walking "righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world," and which, borrowing no help from enthusiasm, or pride, or vanity, relies, in the meekness of a rational and serious faith, on the unseen help of God's grace. Such is Christian sanctity, and such a sanctity *is* strong and convincing evidence of the divine origin of that faith from which it springs.

There are some who seem to think that in moral questions, as well as in doctrinal questions, their judgment is infallibly right; and that though, in practice, they are liable to go wrong, this can only be when they offend against the dictates of their own conscience. This is to claim a great superiority over the Apostle Paul, and to reverse his procedure. *He* did not set up his own conscience as an infallible standard of right and wrong; for *he* says, "I judge not mine own self; for I know nothing by (against) myself" (that is, I am not conscious of any wrong); "yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord."

The meritorious sacrifice of Christ is the only foundation

of the Christian's hope, and the aid of His Spirit, the only support of the Christian's virtue.

What is it of which the devout communicants are really partakers in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Surely, of the Spirit of Christ. The bread and wine, not only are merely a sign, but they are a *sign* of a *sign;* that is, they represent our Lord's flesh and blood, and his flesh and blood represent the benefits procured by his death. To eat and drink the symbols, represents our feasting on the sacrifices — our being made sharers of those benefits. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." And as it is the soul or spirit of a man that animates (quickeneth) his body, which would otherwise be lifeless; so Christians who are themselves the figurative body of Christ are quickened — receive life and vigour, "strength and refreshment" —from the Spirit of Christ which dwelleth in them;—"the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit."

We must "watch" as if *all* depended on our own vigilance; we must "pray" as if *nothing* depended on it.

The natural, hearty, fervent prayer of a child cannot but be childish; so that to teach children prayers they cannot understand, while neglecting to teach them other prayers suitable to their age, is to supply them with a promise of strong meat, which they may *hereafter* be able to bear, while withholding the necessary *immediate* nourishment of milk.

The Apostle sets Love above Faith and Hope, not merely as the greatest of the three, but as *including* the other two; because it "hopeth all things and believeth all things."

The Christian must be prepared to believe *all* that his divine Master has taught,—to hope *all* that He has promised, —and to endure and do *all* that He has commanded.

He who taught us by precept to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," has taught us, in His own form of prayer, before we ask for "our daily bread," to pray that His kingdom may come," and His "will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The true Christian is most emphatically and preeminently public-spirited. "None of us," says the Apostle Paul, "liveth unto himself." And he who is the most sedulously occupied in working out on Gospel principles his own salvation, will always be found the most devotedly active in promoting the welfare of his brethren.

When praying that God's servant's may be hurt by no persecutions," let us not forget to pray for the still more important blessing of being preserved from hurting others by persecution.

Most heretics are made so by the orthodox.

Heresies are indefinitely multiplied by injudicious controversy—like the prolific heads of the fabulous hydra, by the unskilful attempt to destroy the first.

Many a one has been led, by an unjust and injudicious charge of heresy, to suppose *that* to be a distinct mode of faith which, in fact, is rather a deficiency of faith, and has thus been partly alarmed, partly provoked, and partly flattered into embodying, maintaining and propagating, as a

peculiar system, what is merely the result of his own slight and inaccurate acquaintance with Scripture.

Many heresies have gone out of themselves, as soon as men have ceased to blow them. Great is the noise when every one is crying "Silence!"

Some men are very zealous for the reformation of a religion, while indifferent to the religion itself that is reformed.

The strongest term of detestation that can be applied to a man — the term "miscreant" affords, in its etymology (misbeliever), a curious instance of the fact, that our hostility against the rejection of our religion by infidelity is greater than against the disgracing of it by immorality.

The irreligious, or profligate, or worldly-minded professor of religion is more chargeable with impiety than the unbeliever, who is, at any rate, not living in the habitual defiance of a God and Saviour whom he acknowledges. If two men receive each a letter from his father, and one of them, on very insufficient grounds, reject it as a forgery, he is not surely more undutiful than the other who, recognizing it as a genuine letter from his father, puts it away, and utterly disregards all the injunctions it contains.

There is no presumption in the idea of a Christian in the present day becoming as perfect as one of the apostles; the presumption lies in his being *content* to remain inferior.

In every Christian duty, improvement is a good sign only when it is a promising sign.

If *no more* is required of a Christian than to do his utmost, so *no less* is required of him.

He who is not *the better* for his religious knowledge, will assuredly be *the worse* for it.

Confident trust in unimproved spiritual privileges will avail to secure their advantages as little as will a confidence in the possession of once fertile land, whose tillage is neglected, avail to make it a source of wealth.

As a frightfully large proportion of the world are, undeniably, practical Antinomians, living as if they did not expect to be hereafter accountable for their conduct, the fact that so very few of them are found to adopt the Antinomian theory, furnishes the most powerful testimony against the truth of that hypothesis.

The fruits of the Spirit is the only test of being led by the Spirit.

As the behaviour of a family will be influenced by the character of the master of the house, so the religion of men will be influenced by the character which they suppose to be that of the Being whom they worship. Thus "he that hath hope in Jesus purifieth himself even as He is pure."

Many a one trusts to the mercy of God, who has never thought seriously of the conditions of that mercy.

When men talk of preparing for death, they mean preparing for the next life.

Those who have doubted of the life to come, or studied to keep the consideration out of sight, are generally found to believe it the most firmly at the awful moment when they would be most glad to disbelieve it; and then to think most of it, when the thought is most intolerable.

A strong sense of the uncertainty and shortness of life, tends to make a man either a thorough-going voluptuary, or a thorough-going Christian.

For the *dying man*, the death-bed is the best time for seeking to make his peace with God; simply because he has no other: for any one else, it is the very *worst*.

He who is a sincere Christian never *can* die suddenly; and he who lives otherwise, necessarily *must*.

It is very difficult for those advanced in life, who have hitherto been deaf to their Saviour's call, not merely to receive a new impression for the moment, but to make a total change in all their habits, thoughts and feelings; but it will be still more difficult every moment they delay it; and in that change is their only hope. Let not such then "grieve any longer, the Holy Spirit," who alone can enable any to surmount the difficulty; for "with God all things are possible." Let them consider their Lord as addressing to them the question, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" They cannot indeed answer, "Because no man hath hired us;" for they have been summoned to go and labour in the vineyard, and have refused: but they can answer by throwing themselves immediately on his mercy and with deep repentance for their past neglect of Him, accepting, though late, the gracious offers they have hitherto disregarded;

striving the more earnestly before "the door is shut," to gain admittance to the presence of Him who will "abundantly pardon" those that return unto Him.

Though it may never be too late to repent, it is always too late to think of deferring repentance.

False security in the great mass of mankind, arises not from a too confident expectation of the glories of a better world, but from thinking too little of any world but this; not from their insensibility to the danger of falling *from* a state of grace, but to that of never striving *to be in* such a state.

To say "we are not expected to be saints," is to forget that the Gospel promises are limited to those who live "as becometh saints."

Instead of enquiring whether there is any harm in this or that, we should rather ask, whether it becomes the redeemed of Christ and the heirs of immortality.

The doctrine of man's immortality, when once the mind can be brought to dwell intently on the subject, is certainly the most interesting and the most important that can be presented to him. Other objects may, and often do, occupy more of our attention, and take a stronger hold of our feelings; but that, in real importance, all those objects are comparatively trifles, no one can doubt. Other matters of contemplation, again, may be, in themselves, not less awful, stupendous, and wonderful; but none of these can so intimately concern ourselves. Admirable as is the whole of God's creation, no other of his works can be so interesting to man, as man himself; sublime as is the idea of the eternal

Creator Himself, our *own* eternal existence after death is an idea calculated to strike *us* with still more overpowering emotions. That man, feeble and short-lived as he appears on earth, is destined by his Maker to live for ever—that ages hence, when we and our remotest posterity shall have been long forgotten on earth — and countless ages yet beyond, when this earth itself, and perhaps a long succession of other worlds, shall have come to an end — we shall still be living; still sensible of pleasure or pain, to a greater degree perhaps than our present nature admits of, and still having no shorter space of existence before us than at first. These are thoughts which overwhelm the imagination the more, the longer it dwells upon them. The understanding cannot adequately embrace the truths it is compelled to acknowledge; and when, after intently gazing for some time on this vast prospect, we turn aside to contemplate the various courses of earthly events and transactions, which seem like rivulets trickling into the boundless ocean of eternity, we are struck with a sense of the infinite insignificance of all the objects around us that have a reference to our present state alone; while every, the most minute, circumstance that may concern the future life, like a seed from which some mighty tree is to spring, rises into immeasurable importance, as the awful reflection occurs that perhaps something which is taking place at this very moment, may contribute to fix our final destiny. There is no one truth, in short, the conviction of which tends to produce so total a change in our estimate of all things.

And this doctrine, so sublime in contemplation, so important in practice, is peculiar to the Gospel. There it was first proposed to us; by it "life and immortality were brought to light;" proposed, not as a matter of curious speculation and interesting conjecture, but of general and well-grounded, and

practical belief; brought to light, not as an ingenious and pleasing theory, but as an established truth; displayed to us, not as a wandering meteor that serves but to astonish and amuse us, but as the great luminary which is destined to brighten our prospects, and to direct our steps. "Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light, through the Gospel."

The Christian's hope, as founded on the promises contained in the Gospel, is the resurrection of the *body*, and that hope depends not on the resurrection of the very same particles of matter,—an idea which has needlessly exposed it to cavils from infidels to which neither reason nor revelation affords means of replying. For, as during this life all the particles of a man's body are undergoing a perpetual and rapid change, that which constitutes it, his body, is not the identity of the materials, but their union with the same soul, and performance of similar functions. And that there should be such a change in the raised body, is no more inconsistent with the promise made to the Christians, than it would be if a kind benefactor, who had engaged to rebuild for a poor man his house that had been destroyed, employed in the erection other and different materials; it would suffice that he had, as before, a house; and one that was suitable for all the same purposes.

It seems not improbable that the change which shall take place in the body at the resurrection of man from the dead, may be itself the appointed means for bringing about a change in the powers and tendencies of the mind. It is plain that the mind greatly depends on the body as its instrument; and on the several members of the body depends the exercise of several distinct powers of the mind; so that the loss or imperfection of any one particular organ,—of the eye for

instance, or of the ear, — will shut out one particular kind of knowledge and of thought from the mind;— that of colours, for instance,—or that of sounds. It is quite possible, therefore, that our minds may at this moment actually possess faculties which have never been exercised, and of which we have no notion whatever; which have lain inactive, unperceived, and undeveloped, for want of such a structure of bodily organs as is necessary to call them forth, and give play to them. A familiar instance of this kind, is the case of a man born blind; whose *mind* or spiritual part is as perfect in itself as another man's; his mind is as capable even of receiving impressions of visible objects by the eyes, as if the eyes themselves (the bodily part) were perfect; for it is plainly not the *eyes* that see, but the *mind* by means of the eyes; yet through this imperfection one whole class of ideas,— all those of objects of sight,— are completely wanting in such a man. Nor could he ever even find out his imperfection, if he were not told of it. He learns from *others* that there is such a thing as seeing, and as light and colours, though he cannot comprehend what they are. And if you could suppose such a case as blind persons brought up from childhood without ever being taught that others possessed a sense more than themselves, they would never suspect anything at all on the subject; should they then obtain sight they would be astonished at discovering that they had all along been in possession, as far as the mind is concerned, of a faculty which they had had no opportunity to exercise, and of whose very existence they had never dreamed,— the faculty of perceiving the visible objects presented to the mind by the eye.

In the expressions and thoughts of most persons on the subject of a future state, it seems to be supposed and

implied, though not expressly stated, that the heavenly life will be one of *inactivity*, and perfectly stationary, — that there will be nothing to be done, nothing to be learnt, no advances to be made, nothing to be *hoped* for, nothing to *look forward* to, except a continuance in the same state. Now this is not an alluring view to minds constituted as ours are. The ideas of *change*, *hope*, *progress*, *improvement*, *acquirement*, *action*, are so intimately connected with all our conceptions of happiness,—so interwoven with the very thought of all enjoyment, — that it is next to impossible for us to separate them, and to contemplate a state from which they are excluded, without an idea of tediousness and wearisomeness forcing itself upon them. Even with the most perfect assent of the understanding to the assertion that it will be exquisitely happy, such a state can never be interesting to our feelings as they now are, involving as it does a change of our nature so total as to reverse every point in it. To suppose this total difference between the true Christian's life on earth, and the Christian's life in heaven, is to suppose that a tree which we had been carefully cultivating while a sapling, and assiduously rearing to maturity, was destined, immediately on attaining maturity, to become another tree of a totally different kind—a plant of some distinct species. Now the very idea of a change so total as to reverse every point in our nature, whether good or bad, must necessarily take away our interest in the reward promised, because no one can bring himself to *feel* (though he may to *believe*) that it is *he himself*, the very person he now is, that will obtain that reward. To illustrate this last remark more fully: the ancient heathens had many fables of men being transformed into brutes of different kinds, by the power of their gods; now I cannot think that any one of them who firmly believed in such occurrences, if he imagined to himself the case of

his being thus changed into an animal of some other species, could take any lively interest in the thought of what should then befal him.

But I can see nothing either in reason or Scripture, to compel us to believe that there is any further change to be expected than is necessary to qualify the faithful for a state, where what is evil will be taken away; what is imperfect, made complete; and what is good, extended and exalted. Surely, this supposed reversing of the dispositions and whole constitution of the human character, is utterly inconsistent with those statements of Scripture which represent this life, as not only a state of trial, but of *preparation* also, for a better world. For if the condition into which the Christian is required to bring himself in this life, bear no degree of resemblance to that which is promised in the next; surely there could be nothing of *preparation* in the case. But that there is a resemblance, is expressly asserted in Scripture; a resemblance between heaven and everything most pure and virtuous, noblest and greatest in the true sense, — most sublimely good and happy,—most heavenly, in short— on earth; and a resemblance also between Christ's sincere followers and Himself, "who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able even to subdue *all* things unto Himself." Thus when the apostle John exhorts his hearers to imitate the example of Jesus, and to become as like Him as possible, he does so, *on the very ground*, that hereafter they may hope for a greater degree of resemblance to Him. "We know not what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like unto Him; for we shall see Him as He is; and every man that *hath this hope* in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." Now, if the Christian be called upon in this life to employ himself

actively in promoting God's glory, and the happiness of his brethren, if he be encouraged, also, to keep continually advancing in knowledge and in goodness; to improve in acquaintance with the written Word of God, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; is it likely that all this advancement should be totally stopped, that all this activity should be quenched, that all these dispositions should be changed—in a glorified state? And if the *wishes* and *inclinations* of the blest are still to remain, in these respects, similar to what they are now, of course the life they are to lead (since it cannot be supposed their wishes will be *vain*,—their desires *un*gratified) must be of a corresponding nature. And the hope that it will be so, is a hope as well founded, as it is cheering and delightful. To be ever advancing nearer and nearer to the nature of our Great Master, though we can never reach it, — to gaze ever closer and closer on those glorious and lovely qualities, of which we can never understand the full perfection, — to advance ever further into the inexhaustible treasury of the knowledge of God's mighty works, seems one of the sublimest and most interesting, and most encouraging, and, at the same time, one of the most rational expectations that a zealous Christian can form respecting the blissful state prepared for him.

I see no reason why those who *have been* dearest friends on earth, should not, when admitted to the future happy state, continue to be so, with full knowledge and recollection of their former friendship. If a man is still to continue (as there is every reason to suppose) a social being, and *capable* of friendship, it seems contrary to all probability that he should cast off or forget his former friends, who are partakers with him of the like exaltation. He will indeed be

greatly changed from what he was on earth, and unfitted perhaps for friendship with such a being as one of us is *now;* but his friend will have undergone, by supposition, a corresponding change. And, as we have seen, those who have been loving playfellows in childhood, grow up, if they grow up with good, and with like dispositions, into still closer friendship in riper years, so also it is probable that when *this* our state of childhood shall be perfected, in the maturity of a better world, the like attachment will continue between those companions who have trod together the Christian path to glory, and have "taken sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends." A change to indifference towards those who have fixed their hearts on the same objects with ourselves during this earthly pilgrimage, and have given and received mutual aid during their course, is a change as little, I trust, to be expected as it is to be desired. It certainly is not such a change as the Scriptures teach us to prepare for.

And a belief that under such circumstances our earthly attachments will remain, is as beneficial as it is reasonable. It is likely very greatly to influence our *choice* of friends, which surely is no small matter. A sincere Christian would not indeed be, at any rate, utterly careless whether those were sincere Christians also with whom he connected himself: but his care is likely to be much greater, if he hopes that, provided he shall have selected such as are treading the same path, and if he shall have studied to promote their eternal welfare, he shall meet again, never to part more, those to whom his heart is most engaged here below. The hope also of rejoining in a better state the friend whom he sees advancing toward that state, is an additional spur to his own virtuous exertions. Everything which can make heaven appear more desirable, is a help towards his progress in

Christian excellence; and as one of the greatest of earthly enjoyments to the best and most exalted Christian is to witness the happiness of a friend, so, one of the brightest of his hopes will be, that of exulting in the most perfect happiness of those most dear to him. As for the grief which a man may be supposed to feel for the loss—the total and final loss —of some who may have been dear to him on earth, as well as of vast multitudes, I fear, of his fellow-creatures, I have only this to remark,—that a wise and good man in this life, though he never ceases to use his endeavours to reclaim the wicked and to diminish every kind of evil and suffering; yet in cases where it is clear that no good can be done by him, strives as far as possible (though often without much success) to *withdraw* his thoughts from evil which he cannot lessen, but which still, in spite of his efforts, will often cloud his mind. We *cannot* at pleasure draw off our thoughts entirely from painful subjects which it is in *vain* to meditate about. The power to do this completely, when we will, would be a great increase of happiness; and this power therefore it is reasonable to suppose the blest will possess in the world to come; that they will occupy their minds entirely with the thought of things agreeable, and in which their exertions can be of service; and will be able, by an effort of the will, completely to banish and exclude every idea that might alloy their happiness.

The appearances of angels served to prepare men's minds, in some degree, for the doctrine of a *resurrection*, and to aid their conception of a new and exalted state of existence in another world. And this connexion between the appearances of angels and the doctrine of a *resurrection* is confirmed by the fact that the Sadducees who denied the one, denied the other also. "For the Sadducees say there is no

resurrection, neither angel nor spirit, but the Pharisees confess both." There were exhibited to the senses of men created beings in many respects like men, in others more refined and elevated; having a human form and speech, and something of human affections, but without the grosser attributes of mortals. This served to form and to keep up the idea, not only that man is not the highest of God's creatures, but moreover that there is a state of existence, exalted indeed and glorified beyond that in which we now are, yet not so utterly remote from our present condition but that we may conceive something resembling it to be reserved for us hereafter, and may be led to aspirations after something higher and better than man's life on earth, and which yet shall not be inconsistent with our consciousness of personal identity, with our being, and feeling ourselves to be, the same individuals. The angels, in short, in their visits to this world of ours, gave man a glimpse of a higher and better world. They were *specimens*, so to speak, of what is to be found in the heavenly Canaan, our Land of Promise, answering to those fruits which the spies, sent by Moses into Canaan, brought to the Israelites in the dreary and barren wilderness, in order to convince them of the goodness of "that pleasant land," and to encourage them to enter into it.

It is worth while to remark that, in all the cases recorded of angels bringing messages from heaven, a sufficient test was provided to secure the persons concerned from being misled by any delusions of imagination, and to assure them sufficiently of its being a real communication from heaven that they had received. The finding of a babe lying in the manger at the inn, as the shepherds had been told by the angel, saying, "this shall be the sign unto you," proved clearly that they had not been dreaming, or deluded by any

fancy. Again, the absence of the body of Jesus from the sepulchre, and afterwards his own appearance to the disciples, attested the truth of the announcement of his resurrection. And again, the actual release of the Apostles from prison was of course a proof perfectly decisive that there was no delusion. And, as Dr. Paley has justly remarked, either Cornelius's vision, or Peter's — taking each separately — might, conceivably, have been a delusion: taking the two conjointly and connected, as they were, with each other, there could be no doubt of the reality of either.

The members of Christ's Church, as it now exists, must not suppose that they are less favoured than God's people were formerly, on account of their not having, like those, sensible communications from heaven by thunderings, and supernatural flames, and voices, and visits of angels. We who have a religion less addressed to the senses, and more spiritual, than the earlier dispensations, have, no less than God's people of old, a promise of divine presence, and aid, and guidance. Our divine Master is present with us by his Spirit. He visits us, in the thoughts that arise in our hearts,—in the occurrences that happen around us. Let any one suppose the case of an angelic vision presenting itself to his bodily senses. Let him imagine himself visited by a superhuman being, clad in celestial light, and announcing himself as a messenger from heaven. And suppose him to remind him that the Saviour who died on the cross for his redemption, is risen from the dead, and is gone to prepare a place for him in the mansions of eternal bliss; but that he will forfeit this rich inheritance, and lose all that He has done for him, unless he gives proof of his love to Him by keeping His commandments; by striving to be led by His Spirit into an imitation of Him. The angel also admonishes him perhaps respecting some

known sin in which he is indulging, or some known duty he is habitually neglecting. Or the heavenly messenger points out to him, how little he practises self-examination, or how much he is devoted to the cares and pleasures of this life, which is so soon to come to an end; and how little, in comparison, his thoughts dwell on the life beyond the grave, and the account he will have to render at the last day, of all that he shall have done or left undone,—of all the advantages he shall have used, or wasted —among the rest, of the very warnings the angel is addressing to him.

Now imagine such a resplendent vision, and such a message, were actually brought before his senses. He would surely be awe-struck; he would be roused from carelessness; he would be filled with earnest good resolutions to profit by the heavenly warning, by devoting himself henceforth more than ever to the care of his eternal salvation. And now, how does the case actually stand? Everything that I have been supposing the angel to have said to him, he already knows as it is. Why not then act, at once, as if he *had* received this angelic message?

Instead of indulging in any vain cravings after a more complete system of divine guidance than we have any reason for expecting, for we are required to walk by faith and not by sight, it is for us to make the most of the advantages we do possess, by studying prayerfully the Holy Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation, and (knowing that, "every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights"), by listening to and following as a voice from heaven — as an angel of the Lord — every suggestion that would lead us to Him — every warning that would keep us in His paths.

Ask yourself, each one who sincerely desires divine help

and guidance, whether you may not, like some holy men of old, have "received angels unawares;" whether you may not have been visited, though not by a divine messenger in bodily shape, yet by some thought or feeling which in some hour of trial, has led you — or *would* have led you — out of evil company, or some other such danger; even as the angels led Lot out of the city doomed to destruction, and *would* have saved his sons-in-law, had they not refused the guidance. May not some temporal loss, or mortification, or alarm, have occurred opportunely to shake off from you the chain of over-devotedness to worldly objects, or to rouse you from indolent carelessness, like the angel which visited Peter in the prison, bidding him arise and gird himself, and causing his fetters to fall off, and the prison gates to open? Or may not the ordinary course of events — that is, of God's providence, which makes "all things work together for good to them that love Him" — have sometimes introduced you to some book, or some teacher, fitted to supply to you just the instruction, or the consolation, you were most in need of; even as the angel brought Cornelius to the knowledge of Peter, who should "tell him what he ought to do?" In these and similar cases, you may have been receiving angelic visits unawares; since every person or thing through which God communicates with us, is, so far, his angel or messenger.

It is remarkable that there are, in the New Testament, much more frequent notices of *evil* than of *good* angels. The cause of this may probably have been, that whatever good offices men may receive from these latter, are never to be sought from them. And it is likely therefore that their existence and agency are the less frequently mentioned, for fear men should be led into the error of false worship. On the other hand, the dangers to which any one may be exposed

from evil spirits, it was right to give warning of, and frequently to remind men to be on their guard against them. But though in the Old Testament the allusions to such beings are much less frequent than in the New, yet there is no such entire omission of the subject as a hasty reader might be led to suppose. For the gods worshipped by the ancient heathen were believed by the Jews, and by the early Christians also, to be really existing evil-demons. For we find the Jews speaking, for instance, of "Beelzebub as the Prince of the demons;" and we know that Beelzebub was the Philistine god worshipped at Ekron. (2 Kings i. 2; See also 2 Chron. xi. 15; Levit. xvii. 7, and Psalm cvi. 37.) And we find the Apostle Paul saying (1 Cor. x. 19, 20), "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice unto demons, and not unto God." Demons, it is to be observed, is the term used in the original, which our translators have in several places (unfortunately) translated "devils;" not recollecting that devil is the *proper name* of an *individual*, and accordingly is never used by the Sacred Writers in the plural number, as applied to evil-spirits, whom they designate by the terms "unclean spirits" and "demons." And this title, "demons," is the very one given by the Pagans themselves to the objects of their worship. Thus, though to the Jews these beings were an abomination, and the worship of them regarded as impious, while the Pagans built temples and offered sacrifices and prayers to them, their real existence was admitted by both. And thus, whether this belief was a delusion or well-grounded, it was therefore quite necessary that Jesus and his Apostles should make some mention of beings which were, in fact, the very gods the heathen intended to worship, for the purpose of putting men on their guard against either being seduced into the worship of them; and also for the purpose of dispelling any false terrors, and of giving assur-

ance of Christ's effectual protection, and final triumph over these adversaries. Accordingly, we find frequent mention made by the Sacred Writers of evil angels or demons, and from various allusions we gather that these evil spirits are "angels who kept not their first estate," that is, who by disobedience and rebellion against God, fell from the condition (perhaps, a state of trial, such as we are in now) in which they had once existed, and becoming pre-eminently depraved, and enemies to the Lord, sought, and still seek, to corrupt mankind—watching to seduce men to their ruin; "seeking," as the Apostle Peter expresses it, "whom they may devour." And it appears, moreover, that these evil beings have a Prince or Leader, called Satan (the Adversary), the Wicked One, the Devil, of whom our Lord expressly speaks as exercising authority over a host of evil spirits, called by him the angels of the devil, (as when he speaks of "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,") and exercising influence by their agency; and thus being present to the minds of many men at the same time; since a leader of a numerous host may be said (and commonly is said) to do that which is actually performed by his servants or soldiers under his direction. Numerous are the references to the existence of the great spiritual personal enemy of mankind: see, for instance, among many others, Matt. xiii. 25, 39; John viii. 44; 1 Tim. iii. 6; 2 Tim. ii. 26; 1 Peter v. 8; 1 John iii.; Heb. ii. 14; Rev. xx. 2. Surely it is an awful, an appalling thought, that we may be this moment and every moment, in the presence of malignant spirits, who are watching occasions for our destruction.

And yet, notwithstanding all these express and reiterated statements, there are persons professing belief in the Sacred Writings who yet deny the existence of any evil spirits; maintaining that it is a thing utterly impossible that God

should permit any such beings to exist. And as for what Christ and his Apostles have said, their expressions, it is contended, are to be understood as a mere accommodation to the popular notions of the day. When they speak of any temptation, or any affliction, bodily or mental, as proceeding from Satan or his angels, this we are told is only a condescension to vulgar prejudices, and what is meant is merely a "personification" of moral evil; a metaphorical description of man's vicious propensities or natural diseases. Thus they explain away the narrative given by three of the Evangelists of the temptation of our Lord in the wilderness, from the direct assaults of Satan, into a parable, or figurative description. Now it is observable, that this is not one of those transactions which are mentioned incidentally in the course of the narratives of other matters, nor is it a transaction which the Sacred Writers had witnessed, and which they might be supposed to have mentioned merely because they had witnessed it, but it must have been brought to their knowledge by Jesus himself; either relating it orally to his disciples while he remained on earth, or else communicating it by the inspiration of His Spirit afterwards. And yet we are told that we are to regard this narrative as a poetical figure of speech, representing Satan as a real personal agent, while in reality no such being had any part in the transaction, or ever existed at all. But, even supposing the language employed to be such as might, conceivably, bear such an interpretation, still Jesus *knew* that his hearers would *not* so interpret it, but would understand it in the literal obvious sense, in which indeed it has been understood by nearly all Christians for eighteen centuries. Now when we remember that he who speaks that which is false in the sense in which he is aware he will be understood, is manifestly a deceiver; not the less, though he may have some hidden meaning which

is true; what are we to think of the moral notions of those who can assert, that he, whom they profess to acknowledge as the heaven-sent Teacher of the Truth, led his disciples to believe that he was tempted by a personal agent, when he *knew* that no such being was concerned? Him whom these bold interpreters profess to venerate as having "come into the world to bear witness of the truth:" Him and his Apostles they represent as not merely conniving at, but deliberately confirming and establishing a superstitious error! For it must be remembered, that this belief of both Gentile and Jew in the existence of evil spirits, if an error, is certainly one which the Lord and his Apostles decidedly inculcated. They do not merely leave uncontradicted, or merely assent to what is said by others as to this point, or merely allude to it incidentally, but they go out of their way, as it were, to assert the doctrine, and most plainly and earnestly dwell upon it. Not only do they make distinct mention of a single individual evil being as the great enemy of man, and of his angels or emissaries, but numerous instances of their agency are recorded by them. Indeed, among the miracles related by the Sacred Writers, as wrought by Jesus and his disciples, none are more prominently put forward than the cures of persons possessed by evil spirits, or demons; (whence the word demoniac) and our Lord himself and his disciples earnestly dwell upon this class of miracles, as a distinguishing mark of the Messiah. "If I," said He, "by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." And so fully was this recognized as a distinguishing mark of the Messiah, that on the occasion of one of those cures, (recorded in Matt. xii. 22) we find the people exclaiming, "Is not this the Son of David?" And when Jesus sent forth the seventy disciples to proclaim "the kingdom of God is at hand," we are told that the seventy

returned from their mission with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us through thy name, to which he replies, saying, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

And yet, plainly as these narratives set forth the reality of demoniacal possession, there are persons found to deny it even among those who acknowledge the existence of evil Spirits; and by these still greater violence, if possible, is done to the words of the Sacred Writers. These rash and profane interpreters require us to believe that when Jesus spoke of "casting out demons," he meant curing natural diseases, and was merely accommodating himself to the prevailing superstition. They proceed on the assumption that the Jews alone, of all nations, had this belief in demoniacal possession, which is utterly contrary to the fact. And yet this notion is not uncommonly entertained even by educated persons, not unacquainted with the works of the Classical Writers; though the Greek word used by them, and by the New Testament Writers is the same; and though the allusions by the heathen authors are frequent to possession by a *demon* (or by a god; the two words being employed by them with little or no distinction) as a thing of no uncommon occurrence. The Greek word, from which our word enthusiast is derived, signified a person thus possessed. We read also in the book of Acts (xvii.) of a damsel — not in Judea but at Philippi of Macedonia, a Roman colony — possessed by a "Spirit of divination." — And the heathen Writers represented the priests and priestesses of their celebrated oracles as possessed by a like spirit of divination. The reality of the existence of demoniacal possession, in conection with these oracles, matters not to our present purpose, for which it is sufficient to be fully aware and keep steadily in mind, that such was the *belief* among those Pagans,

no less than among the Jews. The only difference was (and this also has aided in misleading many as to the fact) that the heathen, as already observed, worshipped as their gods, the beings, or supposed beings, which the Jews held in detestation as "unclean spirits." Proceeding, however, on this assumption, which we see to be entirely gratuitous, that the belief in demoniacal possession was peculiar to the Jews, these modern interpreters maintain that the supposed "demoniacs" were no other than madmen whose insane fancies led them to believe themselves possessed. Now this supposition is utterly at variance with the Sacred History. For though it is certainly not an improbable thing in itself, that some madmen should entertain a groundless fancy of being thus possessed, yet that the Jews did not attribute madness generally to evil spirits and that they distinguished it from cases of "possession" is quite certain. We read, for instance (in Matt. x.), that "they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those that were *possessed* with demons, and those who were *lunatics*, and those that had the palsy, and He healed them." And what is more, we find on the other hand that the cases recorded are far from being exclusively those of madness; for we read (in Luke xiii. 11) of a "spirit of infirmity," and (in Matt. xii.) of a case of *blindness* and *dumbness*. The belief of the Jews therefore, — be it in any case correct or erroneous — as to this agency of evil spirits, could not have been founded on what was said by insane patients concerning their own condition. And as the fact that madness and infirmity, and blindness, and dumbness, may be caused by bodily diseases was as well known by the Jews as by us, there must have been some marks—we cannot at all tell what, as there is no record of any such—which led them to distinguish — as they undoubtedly did distinguish

whether rightly or wrongly—what afflictions were, and were not, caused by the direct agency of demons.

Such are some of the gratuitous assumptions upon which a theory is based that represents our Lord and his apostles as accommodating themselves to a popular superstition in calling the curing of natural diseases the casting out of demons, leaving the shocking consequence to follow *that they are answerable* for all the mischiefs that have arisen from an error which they fostered instead of removing it. And this error, supposing it to be such — one not relating to speculative points of natural science — for instruction in which Scripture was not given, and therefore upon which popular language was used as the only intelligible one—but on a point intimately connected with religion, and moreover, a matter in which the contradiction of the popular belief would have been easy and intelligible; being, in fact, the very doctrine then held by the Sadducees. If such a connivance at religious error can be in any case justifiable, in this, at least, it would have been most completely inexcusable. It would not have had even "the tyrant's plea"—necessity, in its favour. For supposing the Jews to be ever so much wedded to their belief in demoniacal possession, and to have been disposed to reject with scorn any one who should have *merely* told them that those patients whom they supposed to be possessed were not so, and that the popular opinion was all a delusion,—supposing this, still if any one who gave them such an assurance did, at the same time, cure those very patients, every one would have readily believed him. To take a parallel case: there are districts in Europe, and even in our own country, where the vulgar sometimes believe that children or others, afflicted with some unusual kind of disease, are bewitched by some malicious neighbour, and they would be highly displeased with any one who should simply

tell them that this is groundless. But if we *could* go among these superstitious people, and give them assurance, at the same time instantly and completely *restoring the sufferers to health* by a word or a touch, — and this not merely in one instance, but in *all* the cases, and these very numerous ones that were brought before you, no one can doubt that you would readily be believed.

The connivance, therefore, at superstitious error, the confirmation and propagation of religious delusion, which these interpreters impute to Jesus and his followers, would have been one of the most *gratuitous* and most inexcusable of all the "pious frauds" that ever were committed. Now, if they judged such a "pious fraud" as this justifiable and right, any man of common sense and common honesty must distrust them altogether. For "how can one be sure" he may say, "at what point these pious frauds are to stop?" How, in short, can one be justified in giving any credit at all to those whom we suppose to have been knowingly and wilfully deceiving their hearers?

There are two cases of the agency of evil spirits recorded in the New Testament sufficient to prove to all who sincerely admit the truth of our Scriptures, that the power attributed to demons was not a mere description in figurative language of natural disease, no mere delusion of a superstitious and enthusiastic imagination, but literally and undoubtedly a fact. The one is, our Lord's temptation by Satan in the wilderness; and the other, the case in which Jesus is recorded by three of the evangelists to have relieved a demoniac, and permitted the demons to enter into a herd of swine. In the temptation of the *Son of God*, and in the possession of *brute animals*,—such as the entrance of the demons into the herd of swine, the influence of *imagination* could have no place.

In the first, the divine patient was *above* its delusions, in the other the *brute* was as much below it.

The narrative of the transaction among the Gadarenes is perfectly decisive in proving the reality of demoniacal agency, and hence it is that those who are resolved to maintain, at all hazards, a contrary theory, have found in their attempts to explain away the words of the sacred writers, their ingenuity, and I may add, their credulity, not a little taxed. Some of these rash and profane interpreters explain the transaction by saying, that it was the maniac himself — the man who *imagined* himself possessed by a legion of demons, who in a paroxysm of frenzy (of course before his cure), drove the herd of swine over a precipice into the lake, and who immediately *afterwards* was cured of his malady by Jesus.

Now this is completely at variance with the narrative of all three of the evangelists. For they all agree in describing the herd as driven over the precipice *after* the demons were gone out of the man; that is, after his cure was completed. And the whole transaction must have passed before the eyes of the Apostles and other disciples, who were in attendance on Jesus, as well as of the keepers of the swine; so that we must, if this theory is received, suppose all of these to have combined to falsify the narrative in a most important point. No one — even a retired student more conversant with books than with the habits of different kinds of animals—can doubt that it must have been at least a very strange and striking spectacle to see a man driving — not such animals as sheep, but a herd of two thousand swine, — not from one field to another, but, over a cliff, into a lake! One can hardly pronounce, perhaps, what is or is not *possible* to be effected by a furious maniac, with terrific cries and frantic gestures. But certainly if such a thing *had* taken place, it must have

been what none of the spectators could be deceived in, and must have made a strong impression on them. Yet *all* the Evangelists agree that no such thing did take place; all giving a totally different account of the transaction.

Moreover, they all agree in saying that the Gadarenes came and "besought Jesus to depart from their country;" considering that it was *He* who had caused the destruction of the herd. But if the keepers of the swine had seen that it was the *maniac himself* who had done them this damage, they could never have felt this displeasure and dread, towards the very person who had *cured* that maniac. One might as well suppose they would have been displeased with a man for quenching a destructive fire, or stopping a raging pestilence.

We must suppose, therefore — according to the above theory — this portion also of the narrative to have been a fabrication.

Now one may fairly ask any one who believes the Evangelists to have falsified their history in such material points, whether he can trust them at all, for anything? and whether such witnesses would be received at all in any court, or rejected with indignant scorn?

To take a paralled case: suppose some witnesses to declare that a certain individual had been seized and carried off as a slave by a band of murderous robbers, who compelled him to aid them in their outrages; that at length he *escaped* out of their hands; and that *after* this escape, they went without him and committed some remarkable burglary, or other such crime; and then, suppose it to come out afterwards, that it was *he himself* who committed that very crime, and that those witnesses had actually seen him with his own hands breaking open the house, and robbing and murdering the inmates; would not any man of common sense and common

honesty decide that they were utterly unworthy of credit, and deserved to be branded with infamy?

Any one then who adopts the theory I have been alluding to, may as well go on to maintain that the tempest which — just before — our Lord is said to have quelled with a word, had at length abated, as all storms do; and that his disciples represented it as having *suddenly* ceased, on his speaking; and that the sick persons He was said to have cured, some of them had recovered long before, and some, long afterwards, and some, not at all: and in short, that the disciples *originally joined* Jesus for *no reason at all*, and afterwards fabricated the accounts of his mighty works.

This theory, little deserving of notice as it is in itself, becomes important to be dwelt upon as showing how decisively this narrative proves the reality of demoniacal agency, if understood in the plain sense of the words, and as the writers *knew* they *would* be understood; since those who are resolved at all hazards to reject the doctrine, are obliged to explain away the narrative by resorting to the most extravagantly forced interpretations, and the most revolting conjectures.

The modern theories of some professed Christian writers leave us wholly at a loss to decide where Christianity ends and Infidelity begins. They forget one great and important distinction between the works of any writers who do not pretend to divine revelation, and the books of the Sacred Writers. We may hold such works, for instance, as those of Aristotle, or Cicero, or Bacon, in great esteem, without believing what we find in them any further than our own reason approves; and even, if we reject, without sufficient reason, some part of what these authors teach, and thus lose a part of the truths they inculcate, we may yet profit by

another part, and be in no danger of continually rejecting more and more. But it is not so with a writer who professes (as the Apostles do) to be communicating a divine revelation imparted to him through the means of miracles. In matters, indeed, unconnected with religion, such as points of history, or natural philosophy, he may be as liable to error as other men, without any disparagement to his pretensions; but if we reject as false any *part of the religion* which he professes himself divinely sent to teach, we cannot, consistently, believe but that his pretensions are either an imposture or a delusion, and that he is *wholly* unworthy of credit. So difficult is it to stop short of a rejection of Scripture, if we once begin, by making our *own conjectures the standard by which we try Scripture*, instead of taking Scripture as the standard for ourselves.

Any man of honesty, and candour, and common sense, is competent clearly to perceive two things — first, that Jesus did *not* accommodate Himself to the religious prejudices of His time and country; else He would not have been rejected and crucified by His countrymen; who would have received Him gladly if He would have consented to fall in with their notions, and to become such a king as their expectations were fixed on.

And secondly, that His followers would never have knowingly exposed themselves as they did, to scorn, and persecution, and violent death, but in the cause of a religion which they believed true, and in attestation of what they had plainly seen and heard; and that consequently we must, if we would be Christians indeed, and fellow-disciples with them, receive their words (in all that relates to religion) as true, and true in the sense in which they themselves knew that they were understood.

What is revealed to us, therefore, in Scripture on various points, is to be received, (however different it may be from what we might have conjectured,) with humble faith, and reverent docility.

Excessive eagerness to get over some perplexing difficulty often leads rash men to overlook entirely the difficulties — perhaps much greater — which may lie on the opposite side. In the case, however, of those who reject all belief in the existence or agency of evil spirits, they do not even go one step towards removing or lessening the difficulty. The permission of evil spirits is only one branch of that great and insuperable difficulty—the permission of evil in the universe. The difficulty is just as great to explain how *any* evil, however small, should exist, as to explain *all* that does exist in the world. The mortifying and distressing consequences, indeed, of any evil may be greater, but the *difficulty* of explaining it, when that difficulty amounts to an impossibility, must be the same in one case as in another. Hence total impossibility does not admit of different degrees, the smallest amount of misery and the greatest are equally inexplicable. All that we can say is, that for some *unknown cause* evil is unavoidable: and that being the case, it would be folly *to set limits* to the operation of an *unknown* cause, or to wonder at one of its effects more than at another. Surely there is no greater difficulty—great though it undoubtedly is —in the permission of evil spirits than of evil men. For instance, that so many should be sold as slaves, and often to tyrannical masters, is as hard to explain, as that any one should have been exposed to any kind of affliction from demons. We need not wonder that an evil being — whether man or demon—should endeavour to degrade others into his own condition, but that either should be permitted to succeed,

is a difficulty we cannot at all explain, though yet no greater in the one case than in the other.

And yet, obvious as this is, the principal person in a tale by an author of considerable repute, is represented as being at length convinced of the non-existence of evil demons by the argument, that God would never permit any evil being to have power to molest mankind; and this argument is represented as being urged — and successfully urged — while a pirate-ship was actually in sight, the crew of which had just been ravaging the country, and committing all kinds of atrocities! The speaker and the hearer of the argument are represented as having this before their very eyes, and yet without perceiving that it completely refuted what was urged! Whatever, therefore, any one may decide as to the actual existence of evil spirits, this particular objection to it must completely fall to the ground; since it is an objection which lies equally against what every one knows to be true. If we suppose some happy world far distant from our own, in which sin and suffering have always been wholly unknown, and if the inhabitants of such a world were to doubt the possible existence of either bad *spirits* or bad men, there would, in this, be nothing very absurd. But for those who have the experience of the various evils produced by bad men, to deny the possibility of any *other* evil beings, as a thing which could never have been permitted, is an absurdity which, to be refuted, needs only to be plainly stated.

Though an enquiry why evil-spirits *exist* would be fruitless and presumptuous, an enquiry why it was *made known* to us in Scripture may be both allowable and profitable. Whether anything be made known or not concerning the existence of evil-spirits makes indeed no difference as to the difficulty of *explaining* the existence of evil, — but it may

make a great difference as to the *avoiding* of evil. And the great object of Scripture-revelations throughout, seems to be to assist us not in *accounting* for evil, but in escaping it. Now I would appeal to the feelings of any right-minded man, whether the greater dread and detestation of sin is not likely to be produced by our being plainly informed that there are evil-spirits striving to seduce and deceive — or to urge and drive us into rebellion against God — whether we are not so constituted, as to be more watchfully careful against being over-reached and deceived by a *personal enemy* than against any other kind of temptation — more zealously active in resisting the attacks of a living being who seeks our destruction than in counteracting our own inclinations. It is true that the thought of being given up to the base and brutish propensities of the meaner portion of man's nature —of losing the proper dignity of a rational being — of forgetting God and living as strangers and aliens before Him —and of forgetting immortal happiness,—all this is indeed very shocking to a well-disposed mind, but yet not so horrible and appalling as the thought of being ruled over and directed by an evil spirit — of cherishing in our bosom the great enemy of mankind, or agents of his, who hate both God and us, and who are busied in preparing men to share in their final ruin. Now the very unpleasantness of these thoughts, which is perhaps what has led some men to deny the agency of evil spirits altogether, and to explain the Scripture language as a mere personification of moral evil, is the reason why God has revealed it. He would not have taught us the existence of Satan and his angels merely to alarm us, if it had not been *true:* but, it being true, it is in His *mercy* He has set before us all the horrible reality, that we may be the more active and resolute in seeking to escape and to guard against such an enemy. He knows that there

is a kind of ardour and energy infused into the human breast by the thought of a contest with an enemy; not with a mere thing, but a person — an active being, who hates us, and who seeks our destruction, but whom God has given us power to resist, if we contend firmly; and over whom we shall finally triumph, under the banner of our great leader, Christ, if we are not wanting in our own defence.

It is well known how common it is to find Satan and his angels, and everything connected with them, including the "everlasting fire prepared" for them, and for those who are seduced by them, considered as something ludicrous, as something that can hardly be mentioned or alluded to with gravity, as something that not only excites mirth when incidentally referred to, but is even frequently forced in, for the joke's sake, and made to furnish a subject for pleasantry.

Now surely this is a remarkable and a strange thing; for generally speaking, right-minded persons—all who have any pure sentiments and delicacy of taste — are accustomed to regard wickedness and misery as most unfit subjects for jesting. They would be shocked at any one who should find *amusement* in the ravages and slaughter perpetrated by a licentious soldiery in a conquered country; or in the lingering tortures inflicted by wild Indians on their prisoners; or in the burning of heretics under the Inquisition. Nay, the very Inquisitors themselves, who have thought it their duty to practise such cruelties, would have been ashamed to be thought so brutal as to regard the sufferings of their victims as a subject of mirth. And any one who should treat as a jest the crimes and cruelties of the French Revolution, would generally be deemed more depraved than even the perpetrators themselves.

Yet so it is, that the wickedness, and the misery, past and

future, of evil spirits, and of such of our fellow-creatures as are seduced by them, are commonly treated as a jest!

Now suppose a rational being — an inhabitant of some other planet — could visit this our earth, and witness the gaiety of heart with which Satan and his agents, and his victims, and the dreadful doom reserved for them, and everything relating to the subject, are, by many persons, talked of and laughed at, and resorted to as a source of amusement, what inference would he be likely to draw?

Doubtless he would, at first, conclude that no one *believed* anything of all this, but that we regarded the whole as a string of fables, like the heathen mythology, or the nursery-tales of fairies and enchanters, which are told to amuse children. But when he came to learn that these things are not only *true*, but are actually *believed* by the far greater part of those who, nevertheless, treat them as a subject of *mirth*, what would he think of us then? He would surely regard this as a most astounding proof of the great art, and of the great influence of that Evil Being who can have so far blinded men's understandings, and so depraved their moral sentiments, and so hardened their hearts, as to lead them, not merely to regard with careless apathy their spiritual Enemy, and the dangers they are exposed to from him, and the final ruin of his victims, but even to find *amusement* in a subject of such surpassing horror, and to introduce allusions to it by way of a jest!

May the Holy Spirit implant in us all a more Christian temper of mind, and more sober and rational thoughts, and more humane and purer sentiments! May He deliver us from all those superstitious delusions with which the great Enemy of Man seeks to mislead us, and to turn our attention from real dangers, to false and imaginary alarms! And may we have grace to "watch and pray" as we have need to

do, "that we enter not into temptation:" to watch in the right place, and to pray to that all-powerful spiritual Friend, who alone is able to deliver and to guard us in every spiritual danger, and who has promised to be at hand to all who earnestly seek Him!

It is not to be supposed that our spiritual Adversary will always present the same temptation again and again in the same shape; even beasts of prey have more sagacity than to lurk always in the same spot of the same thicket.

The temptations of Satan are to be detected by their character — were he to appear in his proper person, the *temptation* would be *recognized* by the *tempter* — the fruits by the tree; but in the temptations which actually occur, the *tempter* is to be *recognized* by the *temptation*, — the tree by its fruits.

It is remarkable that it was about the time of the Redeemer's coming, that men were most familiar with the fact of the agency of Satan and his angels. But it was necessary to display His superiority over moral evil, as over physical, by a sensible and perceptible victory, not only over disease and death, but also over "him who had the power of death," in short, by exhibiting "the seed of the woman" bruising the serpent's head. Hence, we may suppose it was, that the great Enemy was permitted, at that time more especially, to exercise a direct, perceptible, and acknowledged agency, in order to render his defeat the more conspicuous; that we might, as it were, behold him "like lightning fall from heaven." And He who for our sake encountered and vanquished him, is now ready and "able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by Him."

In the Old Testament history, the angels that are mentioned as appearing are generally not created persons, but immediate manifestations of the Lord Himself, even in those places in which the human form is assumed; so that the expressions, "the Lord," and "the Angel of the Lord," are used indiscriminately; and accordingly, in most of these passages, you read of *divine worship* being offered and *accepted.* To the angels, on the contrary, mentioned in the New Testament—the ministering spirits recorded as appearing—divine worship either is not offered, or is carefully rejected. "See thou do it not!" says the angel to John in the Book of Revelation; "for I am thy fellow-servant." It is important to observe that by the Lord Jesus, on the contrary, such worship was *accepted.*

Almighty God has revealed Himself as the proper object of religion — as the one only power on whom we are to feel ourselves continually dependent for all things, and the one only Being whose favour we are continually to seek; and, lest we should complain that an infinite Being is an object too remote and incomprehensible for our minds to dwell upon, He has manifested himself in his Son, the man Jesus Christ, so that to love, fear, hononr, and serve Jesus Christ, is to love, fear, honour, and serve Almighty God: Jesus Christ being "one with the Father," and "all the fulness of the Godhead" dwelling in Him.

In the beginning of his Gospel John tells us, "God, no man hath seen at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Now, the declaration which John here speaks of, cannot be understood as merely an authoritative announcement of God's will, such as was made by the prophets, because the context evi-

dently shows that he is speaking of something *peculiar* to the only begotten Son; ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο: *It is He* that hath declared Him:" this *declaration* therefore does not refer to a mere *message* sent from God, but to a *manifestation* of God himself in Jesus Christ: which the Apostle has just described by saying, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" and which another Apostle, Paul, describes by saying, "God was *manifest* in the flesh;" and again, Christ was "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." Again, the same Apostle says of Him, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever;" and besides Thomas's confession, and St. Jude's expression, "The only wise God our Saviour Jesus Christ," we have the form of words prescribed to be used in baptism, which even alone are of irresistible weight. But not to multiply quotations, I only add that we have the prophetic title of "Immanuel, God with us;" which, if it had been meant of mere *inspiration*, would have been no mark of distinction for the Messiah, but would have been equally applicable to all the prophets, and which not applying to his *name*, must have applied to his *nature*.

Jesus was tried, in the first place before the Jewish Sanhedrim, and was found guilty of blasphemy, because He confessed himself "the Son of the living God." By this title the Jews understood Him to claim a divine character, and upon his own confession they adjudged Him worthy of death. Unless, therefore, we conceive Him capable of knowingly promoting idolatry, — unless we can consider Jesus himself as either an insane fanatic or a deliberate impostor claiming divine honor not belonging to Him, — unless we come to a conclusion involving a difficulty so revolting to all notions of Divine purity and indeed of common morality, that all difficulties on the opposite side are as nothing, we must assign to

Him "the Author and Finisher of our Faith," the only begotten Son of God, who is one with the Father,—that divine character which He and his apostles so distinctly claimed for Him; and acknowledge that "God" truly "was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." In short, if we would believe in Him at all, we must believe in Him as perfect God no less than perfect man.

The same revolting difficulty is involved if we suppose our Lord to have received, without any attempt to undeceive him, Thomas's confession of faith in his divine nature, for that the words "my Lord and my God" were an ascription of Deity, and not a mere exclamation of surprise, is evident both from the original Greek (which is, literally, the Lord of me, and the God of me) and from our Lord's answer to him.

So fully did the Jews understand Jesus to claim to be the Son of God, in a sense so peculiar as to make them charge him with making himself "equal with God," that not only did they take up stones to cast at him for making himself God, being a man, but it was on this very claim He was condemned. As soon as He acknowledged Himself to be "the Son of the living God," His judges cried "What need we any further witness? we ourselves have heard of his own mouth," and immediately, they pronounced Him guilty of death. And it is worthy of remark, that his being thus convicted on his own testimony alone, was perhaps in order to fulfil more emphatically his own declaration—"No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

When the disciples were censured for rubbing out the grains of corn on the Sabbath, the Lord's defence of them

plainly turns on *His own especial* and divine authority. He alludes to the case of David and his companions, who ate, not without the *permission of the Priest*, the show-bread, which it was not lawful for any but the priests to eat. This was, 1st, tacitly acknowledging that the act of His disciples was, in itself, as unlawful as the eating of the show-bread by any but a priest; 2ndly, it was claiming for Himself, at least equal authority with the priest, who dispensed with the rule in David's favour; 3rd, it was claiming rather *more* authority; because there was *not*, in this case, as in David's, the plea of *urgent necessity*. But then, he proceeds to compare this case with that of the "priests in the temple," who were permitted to profane the Sabbath, by doing the necessary work for the Temple-service: now, this could not mean that the example of the priests in the temple authorized *all* men to go about their ordinary business on the Sabbath; but that example did apply to the disciples who were occupied in ministering to *Him who was Himself the Temple*, in whom "all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt" (Mark ii. 23—28; Matt. xii. 6); and who, on another occasion, to which I conceive He was in this place alluding, claims for Himself the very title of the "Temple" (John ii. 19—22). Lastly, He declares that the "Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath, inasmuch as the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

On this passage, which has often been but indistinctly understood, it may be remarked, 1st, that it implies an actual violation of the Sabbath; else it would have been needless to plead a supreme *power over* that ordinance: 2ndly, that it not only cannot imply that *any other* man had a similar dispensing power, but implies the very reverse; else it would have been nugatory to claim for the "*Son of Man*" (the title by which Jesus distinguished Himself) a power which *others*

might equally claim: 3rdly, that these are not (as some have represented) two distinct remarks, but stand in the relation of Premiss and Conclusion; "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; *therefore* the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." He evidently means that though He made no pretensions to a dispensing power in respect of *moral* duties (man being *made for them*), *positive* ordinances, on the contrary, being "made for man" (*i. e.*, designed as means — often as local or temporary means — to facilitate man's improvement), might be dispensed with, or abrogated by, the same authority which established them; viz., by the *divine* authority which he claimed. The reasoning, at full length, and stated regularly, will stand thus:—"Any positive ordinance (*i. e.*, one made for man, and not man for it) may be dispensed with by my (*divine*) authority: the Sabbath is such an ordinance; therefore the Sabbath may be dispensed with by my authority."

Christ's being very often, and *pointedly*, spoken of as a *man*, has been urged as an argument that He was *no more than man;* whereas it is a very strong confirmation of the arguments on the very opposite side; for if Christ were but a man, and if nobody had ever supposed Him divine, what need could an Apostle have to *insist* on His humanity any more than on his own, or any one's else? but if all readily believed that Christ was *divine*, it then became important to enforce the belief that He was a *man*. Indeed it appears to have been a very early error to maintain that Christ was a man in *appearance* only, and his body a *phantom*. Hence St. John makes it a test of orthodoxy to confess that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," but if they were *mistaken* in thinking Christ divine they would surely have been *told*

expressly that He was *not;* since to tell them merely that He was human, was manifestly insufficient to disabuse them.

The Apostles do indeed direct our worship exclusively to God; but to "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself;" nor do they dwell on the necessity of making in our devotions, any mental separation of the two natures of that person who is the object of our worship. They addressed their prayers to a being whom they regarded as both divine and human; "the man Christ Jesus," in whom "dwelleth" (not some emanation or portion of the Deity, but) "*all* the fulness of the Godhead bodily." They addressed Him in their worship by his human *name*, as "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Nor could they, indeed, have *invoked* him as their *intercessor* and *mediator*, by virtue of his meritorious sacrifice, keeping out of their minds the human nature which those offices imply. Observe how, in the epistle to the Colossians, Paul presents to our view the divine and the human attributes of our Saviour almost simultaneously; "in whom," says he, "we have redemption *through his blood*, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature, (πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, born *before* all creatures) for *by Him were all things created*, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible." (Col. i. 14, 15, 16.) That the notions conveyed by such expressions to a plain reader are philosophically correct, I will not undertake to maintain: it is sufficient that they are Scriptural. And the Scriptures being designed, by unerring wisdom, for the instruction of the simple unphilosophical minds of the mass of mankind, differ in this important respect from any philosophical treatise; that while the latter is liable to be utterly misunderstood by those destitute of the advantages of education and learning, they cannot, though they

may contain passages not intelligible to the unlearned, be calculated to mislead them as to important matters, by conveying to their minds an obvious sense which yet shall not be the true one.

This consideration the Socinians appear to have always overlooked. Finding that this or that text *may* possibly be so explained as to avoid the obnoxious doctrine, they try another, and finding that this *also* may be explained away, they so go through them all; not considering how immensely the improbability is multiplied, of such a series of texts, — such a *chain* of testimony — being all to be understood, according to a forced interpretation, and not according to the obvious sense. If I have to make one hundred throws with dice, it is not very improbable that I may throw sixes the first time, nor is it very improbable that I may the second time; and so on, of *any other* single throw: but who would infer from thence that it is not improbable I may throw sixes one hundred times running? which every one will allow to be a moral impossibility. At the best they will have made out the Sacred Writers to be laying a snare for their readers. Even admitting that every passage in Scripture would, considered in itself, bear their interpretation, still if the simple and *obvious* meaning to plain readers be the reverse of the truth, how can the Scriptures convey a revelation? If, as they contend, the worship of Christ be idolatry, must not the Scriptures themselves be charged with leading ordinary Christians into idolatry?

To explain the atonement of Christ I do not pretend; but as for the fact, I cannot conceive how a man can doubt it who really believes the Scriptures, and searches them with a candid mind, without any predetermination to believe nothing but what he can understand. To quote every passage in

which this doctrine is stated and alluded to, would be to transcribe the bulk of the Sacred Writings.

He was the begotten of his Father from all eternity, as He was our Redeemer from all eternity; (whence He is called "the Lamb *slain* from *the foundation of the world*") for it must be borne in mind that there is not with God, as with us, a *distinction* of *past*, *present*, and *future*; but all things are eternally and simultaneously *present* to the divine mind; hence the name of God is I AM (Jehovah), and hence Christ says, (not that He *was* from all eternity, but) "before Abraham was, I am."

We can comprehend this eternal presence of all things only as we can the divine nature in general; *i. e.*, by negatives: *e. g.*, all that we can comprehend of *eternity* is, that it has *no* beginning, and *no* end: in like manner, as all our idea of *duration* is derived from the *succession* of ideas, (*vide* Locke,) which a being perfectly omniscient cannot have, we are led by the feeble glimmer of reason, as well as by Scripture, to conclude that with God there can be no distinction of past, present, or future; and that is all we know or can conceive about it.

In treating of the Trinity, I wish hypostasis had been used instead of person, because it would have conveyed none but the right sense. Person, in its ordinary sense, always implies a distinct substance; in its theological sense, it is a literal, or rather, perhaps, an etymological translation of the Latin word *persona*, which has not that meaning, and is applied by the Church to express the distinction which she affirms to exist between Those whose identity of substance she expressly maintains.

God is in a certain sense one, and in a certain sense three, and the Apostles were commanded to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; because no man can be a Christian, unless he not only acknowledge God, but acknowledge Him, 1st, in his *simply divine* nature, and as the Creator of the world who sent into the world that being of two natures, Jesus Christ; 2ndly, as united with the human nature in that very being who redeemed and who intercedes for us; and 3rdly, as entering into, sanctifying, and otherwise spiritually operating upon his creatures.

The circumstance, that the first Christian writers neither mentioned the Trinity nor alluded to any hard or revolting mystery in that point, from which, in after ages, arose so much difficulty, controversy, and schism, is briefly and readily accounted for by the Socinians, by their denying that the Apostles taught any such doctrine; but this is to remove one difficulty by raising another much greater; for on this hypothesis we must suppose that the disciples baptized in the name of *God*, of a *man*, and of a *quality or operation;* and that both they and Christ Himself applied to a mere man many attributes of the Deity; or at least said enough to put their converts (whom they never cautioned on this head) in great *danger* of attributing divinity to one who was really but a man; conclusions so revolting that it is wonderful how a candid mind can submit to them.

The doctrine of the Trinity, (which is, perhaps, the oftenest of any treated as a speculative truth, about which none but learned divines need troubles themselves,) as it is a summary of that faith into which we are baptized, and the key-stone of the Christian system, ought to be set forth continually and universally, as the support of every part of the

building of the Christian faith, and the Christian life; reference should be made to it, not merely on some stated solemn occasions, as to an abstruse tenet to be assented to, and then laid aside, but perpetually, as to a practical doctrine, connected with every other point of religious belief and conduct, and the foundation of the Christian faith, and hope, and love.

As the doctrine of the Trinity may be considered as containing a summary and compendium of the Christian faith, so its application may be regarded as a summary of Christian practice. As we believe God to stand in these relations *to us*, we also must practically keep in view the three *corresponding relations* in which, as is plainly implied by that doctrine, we stand *towards Him;* as, first, the children of God; and "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," by adoption: secondly, as the redeemed people of the Lord Jesus Christ; purchased to Himself for His service; and thirdly, as being "the temple of the Holy Ghost," our Sanctifier, remembering that "if any one defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." This threefold relation kept before us, in heart and life, we shall find in God a Father, a Saviour, and a Comforter, now and for ever.

It is a common error to acknowledge in general terms, the necessity of the ordinary operation of the Spirit, but to explain them away in each particular case; thus completely nullifying the doctrine of spiritual influence.

Redemption by Christ, and the other doctrines immediately connected with this, are exposed to be rejected, from their being by no means flattering to the pride of human nature. Men are apt to be prejudiced against them, from wishing to believe only such truths as their own reason can discover,

and to be saved solely by their own merits; and especially is this prejudice the besetting sin of men whose reason is cultivated, and who are free from the propensity to gross vices. Some such men bring themselves to withstand the evidence of Christianity; others think it easier (though both are, in truth, equally hard) to *explain away* those doctrines they object to; and which are, in reality, *all* that make the *essential difference* between Christianity and Infidelity. But I would not attribute this temper to all Socinians, many of whom, I trust, would scorn the uncandid artifices and gross cheats (such as, I believe, were never exceeded in any controversy) by which too many of their leaders seek to maintain their cause. And many Socinians have, I am convinced, been *scared* from belief by the harsh, revolting, self-contradictory statements, the dogmatical violence, and the futile explanations, into which too many of the orthodox have fallen. It should be remembered, among other things, that a professed *explanation* may always be fairly objected to, if *unintelligible;* not so, if you keep to the *words* of *Scripture*, for what we cannot comprehend *may* nevertheless be true, and *must* be, if God has expressly revealed it.

To have ascertained, and to perceive *a* reason for anything that God has done, is far different from perceiving *the* reason; though the two are often confounded. We are sure that the sun gives light and heat to the world; and many ignorant savages, perhaps, conclude from thence, that it was created for no other purpose; doubtless we are as much called on for gratitude as if the case were so; but we are well assured that many other planets partake of the same advantages, and we should be very much to blame, were we to conclude positively that even this is the only, or indeed the principal, purpose for which the sun was created. So,

whatever benefits to mankind we may perceive from the manifestation of God in the flesh, we have no right to infer that there may not be other, and even greater objects effected by it, of which, for the present at least, we must remain ignorant.

If, with due reverence, we enquire—not, why the incarnation of God in Christ was necessary—an enquiry both fruitless and presumptuous, — but (as what it cannot but behove us to know) why He thought fit to reveal this incarnation, to announce Himself as the eternal "Word made flesh," we shall find good reason for concluding that it was, in part at least, for two purposes most important to mankind; first, by a softened and endearing, as well as impressive, manifestation of the Deity, to aid and exalt our piety, engaging our affections in the cause of religion; and secondly, by a bright example of superhuman virtue, seconded by the promise of spiritual aid, to instruct and encourage us in our duty — to illuminate and direct our Christian course — to purify and elevate our nature. The one purpose, in short, may be said to have been to bring down God to man, the other to lift up man towards God.

Jesus Christ, as "the image of the invisible God," declared God to man by manifesting, as far as our feeble faculties well permit, the divine glory, and shadowing forth the attributes of the unsearchable God, exhibiting a more impressive and endearing picture of them than we could in any other way attain; and thus drawing our whole heart and affections towards Him.

When Christ fed a multitude with five loaves, He made not indeed a greater, or a more benevolent display of power, than He does in supporting, from day to day, so many millions

of men and other animals as the earth contains; but it was an instance far better calculated to make an impression on men's minds of his goodness and parental care. I speak not now of this miracle as an *evidence* of his pretensions; for that purpose would have been answered as well by a miracle of destruction; but of the peculiar *beneficent* character of it. The same may be said of his healing the sick, raising the dead, and teaching the people.

Many, it is true, of the qualities which our Lord displayed, such as his patience under provocation, and fortitude against pain and danger, are such as can belong to Him in his human nature alone, and can present us but a very faint shadow of the attributes of God considered as such; but still these are attributes of one and the same *Person*, in whom we believe the divine and human natures to have been united; though we can no more comprehend that union than we can that of the human soul and body; and they are well fitted to fix our affections on that Person.

If, as is notoriously the fact, our only notion of the divine attributes, and our terms for expressing them, are, and always must be, borrowed from such human qualities as have the most analogy to them, it seems to follow inevitably, that the more excellent man would give us ever the more adequate notion of the divine excellence; and, consequently, that the life of that Man who was altogether perfect, by union with the Godhead, must afford us the very best idea (however imperfect that best may be) that we can attain of the moral attributes of God.

As it may be said to have been one purpose of the revelation of the stupendous work of the incarnation to bring down God to man; so we have reason to conclude another

purpose to have been to lift up man to God, by exhibiting, seconded by the promise of spiritual aid, a perfect and exalted model of human excellence, and proposing it for our imitation.

It is an old and well-established maxim, that men learn better from example than from precept. But the difficulty is to find an example fit for imitation. Mere human models are all, more or less, imperfect; and the faults and the virtues of each individual are, in general, so intimately blended, that there must always be a certain degree of danger in copying even the best men. And an ideal model, such as the Sapiens, the wise man, or perfectly good and happy character, whom the Stoics held forth as a pattern, even if we suppose it unexceptionable, wants, *as ideal*, the power of inspiring that interest and sympathy — that affectionate reverence — that emulation which a really existing PERSON can alone inspire; and, being represented to us only by general description, is but one short step removed from abstract moral precept. The mode by which this difficulty is met by Christianity, is absolutely peculiar to it. By it — and by it alone — an example is proposed to us, superior by its living reality to all ideal models however perfect, and to all real but human ones, in its superhuman perfection.

If, while some of the ancient moralists were employed in recounting the actions, and holding forth the examples, of really existing illustrious men, to stimulate the emulation of their hearers, — and while others were pointing out, in the grave and lofty descriptions of the philosopher, or the vivid representations of the poet, an ideal exemplar of perfect excellence;—a man exhibited, such as men *should* be, not such as they are, — what would these sages, I say, have thought, had they been assured on sufficient evidence that such a man

had actually appeared on earth; not having his virtues tarnished with defects, like the heroes of their histories; not a phantom of imagination, like the persons of their theatre, or the wise men of their schools; but a real, living, sublime and faultless model of god-like virtue? Surely they would have acknowledged, with one voice, that such a character, and such a one only, was exactly suited to their wishes, and to the wants of their hearers; if they were at all sincere in their professions, they would have hailed with rapture the announcement of his existence; but would have wondered at the same time, and doubted, how human nature could ever have attained this pitch of excellence. We might have answered them, human nature by itself is indeed far too weak for the task; but in Christ the divine nature was united to it; in Him "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" the Deity was ever present in an especial manner to direct and support his human soul; and thus presented to his creatures a perfect pattern, which through the promised aid of the Spirit of Christ, they may copy; that by imitating the divine excellence, as far as it is possible for a creature to do so, we may become, as Christ himself expresses it, "like unto our Father which is in heaven," and be thus fitted for enjoying a more near approach to his presence in a better state; that we also may be, more completely than in this life, "sons of God, brethren, and joint-heirs of Christ," and partakers of his glory. "Beloved," says the Apostle John, "now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like unto Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

Whatever may be our station in life, or peculiar circumstances, we shall still find that Jesus Christ has "left us an ensample that we should follow his steps;" because the principle of devoted obedience to God, love towards man, and

abjuration of all selfish objects, is one which is called for, and must be put in practice, in every situation. Besides which, it is very remarkable, that while all the illustrious characters which are usually held up to our imitation, are persons who occupied such exalted stations, that their lives afford but little instruction to those in humbler and more private situations, (that is, in fact, to the great mass of mankind,) our Saviour's life, on the contrary, though he had so high an office to execute, yet, from the humble station in which he appeared, contain lessons for every description of mankind. And if the student's own heart be not in fault, his character will not fail to receive some tincture from the character he is contemplating. Every Christian who deserves the name makes it his attentive study; and those who have learned the most of it, are ever the most desirous, and the most capable, of learning yet more. Many valuable writers have treated of the subject; but the Gospels themselves (as those very writers would be the first to admit), will teach more of the imitation of Jesus than all other books together. Each man may do more for himself in this study than the ablest theologian can do for him. He will find in every page such active yet unpretending benevolence—such exalted generosity and self-devotedness — such forbearing kindness and lowliness, combined with dignity—such earnest and steady, yet calm and considerate, zeal—such quiet and unostentatious fortitude—such inflexible yet gentle resolution —that he must acknowledge with the Jewish officers, "never man spake like this man:" "never did man," he will add, "act like this man;" "truly," as the centurion remarked, "this was a righteous man; truly this was the Son of God;" it was "Emanuel, God with us."

The birth of Him who came into the world to save his

people from their sins, will be remembered by each one of us thousands of ages hence, and for ever. It behoves us to reflect, in time, *how* it will be remembered by us in eternity.

There is but one mediator between God and man,—Christ Jesus—between him and man—none. He is ever near us—ever ready to hear us.

Those who deny the divine character of Christ and the Atonement by his blood, and reckon Him as no more than a great prophet while yet dwelling on his resurrection as the chief part of the Gospel which they profess to receive, would do well to receive the instruction it affords to all who are willing to learn. His rising merely from the dead, and preaching the doctrine of a general resurrection to others, would not, certainly, prove Him to be more than man; but if He raised himself from the dead by his own power, and promised to his faithful followers not merely that they *should rise* again, but that *He* would "raise them up at the last day," it is surely plain He could be no less than divine. "No man," said he, "taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." The same Scriptures that tell us "Him God raised up," plainly show that this was that "fulness of the Godhead" which, as the Apostle tells us, "dwelt in Jesus Christ bodily." For He is everywhere represented as himself overcoming and triumphing over death. This He did by leading the way to immortal life; by being "the first fruits of them that slept;" having, as man, been subject to death, and as God "manifest in the flesh" raised himself from death to confirm his promise that He would raise up his faithful followers; suffering the penalty of sin in his own person, and entering first into the

glory prepared for his disciples — the reward which He, not they, had earned. Hence it is stated by the Apostle that He "was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification."

The Scriptures present to us the Resurrection of Jesus in three points of view. — I. It was a decisive evidence of the truth of his Gospel. II. It explained in a great degree the doctrines of that Gospel and its whole character. III. It furnishes a type, representation, or emblem of the new and spiritual life required of the Christian; that we, being dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we may become new creatures, — "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

The doctrine of salvation by the meritorious sacrifice of Christ, is objected to as dangerous; but there is hardly anything that is not, if men will but determine to pervert and misapply it. It is urged, that a man may give himself up to sin, and call this trusting in the merits of Christ: true! and so may a Deist, trusting in like manner to the mercy of God; for who can set bounds to that? The misinterpretations of perverseness and folly we disavow, but cannot prevent; the fault is in the *men*, not in the doctrines. "Abusus non tollit usum."

As the cloudy pillar which stood between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel was a cloud and darkness to those, but gave light by night to these; even thus, Paul found the Gospel of "Christ crucified" was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness;" but to them that believe, "the wisdom of God and the power of God."

The Christian faith is not merely to believe what Christ has taught, but to believe *in Him*. Jesus did not come to *make* a revelation so much as to be the *subject* of a revelation. He was only so far the revealer and teacher of the great doctrines of Christianity, as we might call the sun and planets the discoverers of the Newtonian system of astronomy. He is not merely the *teacher* of the true way to eternal life, — He *is* "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He is not merely the *preacher* of the resurrection and immortal life, — He *is* the Resurrection and the Life.

May his Holy Spirit implant this faith in our affections, and enable us to display it in our lives; and bring us to be partakers of the blessing He has promised to those who, having "not seen," have yet believed; "that believing, we might have life through his name."

The Socinian's argument weighs against himself in several points. For instance, it is urged, that the meritorious sacrifice of Christ is a most unintelligible and mysterious means of salvation; whereas, if we suppose that the establishment of a pure and authoritative system of morality was the object of his mission, the whole is quite conceivable and reasonable. Such is the Socinian's argument. Now, I should be inclined to conjecture, *a priori*, that a revelation *would* probably contain something which unassisted reason would never have devised. It is surely not inconceivable, at least, that God may see a fitness in our believing some truths which are, to our present faculties, incomprehensible; supposing, as I do, that this is the state of the fact, I readily perceive the necessity of a revelation, which I could *not* perceive, if I thought this revelation contained nothing but what was discovered or discoverable without it.

It has been alleged by objectors to Christianity, that God would never interfere with the course of his own creation, and therefore that a divine revelation and miracles are, *a priori*, impossible. But they forget, that it is not in our power to determine what are interruptions of the course of Nature. If one of the ephemeral insects which only exist a single day, were to be endowed with reason, and to have his life so prolonged as to behold the approach of night, he would imagine the sinking sun and the darkness were a wonderful and terrible *interruption* to the course of nature, instead of *part* of that regular course. And so, if a clock could be so constructed as to strike once in a century, each striking would seem to those who knew nothing of its workmanship, a curious phenomenon or accident. Again, it was at first thought that comets moved at random through the skies, and were mere *accidents* in the system of the universe; now it is known that their revolutions are subject to definite laws. And so much in the scheme of God's providence which we imagined to be interruptions, may, in fact, be merely parts of that great system, of which we can only dimly understand a small portion.

Whoever rejects as incredible the notion of there having been any direct communication between God and man at any time, because we have no visible proof of any such communication taking place now, must believe that Man at first civilized himself. Now everything that we know of the laws of the human mind lead us to judge that this is impossible; and all experience tends to prove that such a thing has never happened; nor can a single instance be alleged, without manifestly begging the question, of any nation that ever of itself made the *first steps* from a savage to a civilized state. When, indeed, men have arrived at a certain stage in the

advance towards civilization (far short of what exists in Europe), it is then possible for them, if nothing occurs to keep them back, to advance further and further towards a more civilized state. Human society may be compared to some combustible substances which will not take fire spontaneously, but when once set on fire will burn with continually increasing force. A community of men requires to be kindled, but requires no more. And this it is that misleads some persons in their notions respecting savages. For, finding that there is no *one* art which might not have been invented by unassisted Man; *supposing him to have a certain degree of civilization to start from*, they hence conclude that unassisted Man might have invented all the arts, *supposing him left originally* in a completely savage state. But this will be found to be contradicted by all history, and inconsistent with the character of such beings as savages actually are. The turbulent and unrestrained passions, the indolence —and above all, the want of forethought, which are characteristic of savages, naturally tend to prevent, and, as experience seems to show, always have prevented, any process of gradual advancement from taking place, except when the savage is stimulated by the guidance and instruction of men superior to himself.

Any one who dislikes the conclusions to which these views lead, will probably set himself to contend against the *arguments* which prove it *unlikely* that savages should civilize themselves; but how will he get over the *fact* that they never yet *have* done this? That they never *can*, is a theory; and something may always be said, well or ill, against any theory; but facts are stubborn things; and that no authenticated instances can be produced of savages that ever *did* emerge, unaided, from that state, is no *theory*, but a statement, hitherto uncontradicted, of a matter of fact.

Now if this be the case, when, and how, did civilization first begin? If Man, when first created, was left, like the brutes, to the unaided exercise of those natural powers of body and mind, which are common to the European and to the New-Hollander—how comes it that the European is not now in the condition of the New-Hollander? As the soil itself and the climate of New-Holland are excellently adapted to the growth of corn, and yet (as corn is not indigenous there) could never have borne any to the end of the world, if it had not been brought thither from another country, and sown; so, the savage himself, though he may be, as it were, a soil capable of receiving the seeds of civilization, can never, in the first instance produce it, as of spontaneous growth; and unless those seeds be introduced from some other quarter, must remain for ever in the sterility of barbarism. And from what quarter, then, could this first beginning of civilization have been supplied, to the earliest race of mankind? According to the present course of nature, the first introducer of cultivation among savages, is, and must be, Man, in a more improved state: in the beginning therefore of the human race, this, since there was no *man* to effect it, must have been the work of *another Being*. There must have been, in short, a *Revelation* made to the first, or to some subsequent generation, of our species. And this miracle (for such it is, as being an impossibility according to the present course of nature), is attested, *independently* of the authority of Scripture, and consequently in *confirmation* of the Scripture accounts, by the fact, that civilized Man exists at the present day.

Taking this view of the subject, we have no need to dwell on the utility, the importance, the antecedent probability — of a Revelation; it is established as a fact, of which a monument is existing before our eyes. Divine instruction is

proved to be necessary, not merely for an end which *we think desirable*, or which *we think* agreeable to divine wisdom and goodness, but for an end which we *know has been* attained. That Man could not have *made* himself, is appealed to as a proof of the agency of a divine *Creator:* and that Mankind could not, in the first instance, have *civilized* themselves, is a proof, exactly of the same kind, and of equal strength, of the agency of a divine *Instructor.*

Some are apt to suppose from the copious and elaborate arguments that have been urged in defence of the authenticity of the Christian Scriptures, that it is harder to be established than that of other supposed ancient books. But the *importance* and the *difficulty of proving* anything, are very apt to be confounded together, though easily distinguishable. We bar the doors carefully, not merely when we expect an unusually *formidable attack*, but when we have an unusual *treasure* in the house.

The authority on which we rest our conviction of the genuineness of the New Testament Scriptures, is of the same *kind* with that on which we acknowledge the works of Cicero and other classical authors, though incomparably *stronger in degree.* For it is not to the Roman world, in its widest acceptation, but to the *literary* portion of it, that we appeal in respect of any volume of the classics. On the contrary, the Christian Scriptures were addressed to all classes (the doctrine of what is called "Reserve," of putting the light of the Gospel under a bushel, being no part of the apostolic system), so that probably for *one* reader of Cicero or Livy, there were more than fifty persons, even in a very early period of the Church, anxious to possess copies of the New Testament Scriptures; and careful, in proportion to the

high importance of the subject, as to the genuineness and accuracy of what they read. There are not a few, who being accustomed to hear the authority of the primitive church spoken of as that on which we receive the New Testament Scriptures, are led to fancy it the authority of *some one society acting collectively*, and in its corporate capacity; and thus, they lose sight of the very circumstance on which the chief force of this testimony depends, namely, that there never was a decree or decision of any one Society; but, what has far more weight, the concurring independent convictions of a great number of distinct churches in various regions of the world.

The testimony which the works of the early Fathers bear to the facts and doctrines of the sacred books, as Christians now have them, has been well compared to that afforded by the fossil remains of antediluvian animals, which prove that, at a certain remote period, animals such as are known to us have inhabited the earth.

The credibility of our Scriptures is established by several distinct arguments, each separately tending to show that those books were, from the earliest ages of Christianity, well known and carefully preserved among Christians; namely: —(1) They were *quoted* by ancient Christian writers (2) with peculiar respect, (3) collected into a *distinct volume*, and (4) distinguished by appropriate names and *titles of respect*, (5) *publicly read* and expounded, and (6) had *commentaries*, &c., written on them; (7) were received by Christians of *different* sects; &c., &c

The Lord's day is observed all over the world, by different and even hostile bodies of Christians, in memory of the

resurrection of Jesus Christ, and not only so, but it is observed by them as a day which has been *always* thus kept, from the very day when the Lord Jesus is recorded to have risen, and to have appeared to his disciples. Now had the observance of it not been from the very first, but introduced in some later age, those among whom it was thus introduced, would have been able to testify that they had never heard of such a festival before. Here then is a monument of the truth of the Sacred History.

The existence of a Christian ministry *generally*, or the unbroken apostolical succession of an order of men, is perhaps as complete a moral certainty as any historical fact can be. For if a century ago, or ten centuries ago, or at any other time, a number of men had arisen, claiming to be the immediate successors of persons holding this office, when, in fact, *no such order of men had ever been heard of*, such a silly pretension would have been immediately exposed and derided. And consequently the Christian ministry is a standing *monument* to attest the public *proclamation* of those miraculous events at the very time when they are said to have occurred, and when there were numbers of persons able and willing to expose the imposture had there been any. And this argument for the truth of the Sacred History, is quite independent of any particular *mode* of appointing Christian ministers. It turns entirely on the mere fact of the *constant existence* of a certain order of men.

This apostolical succession of a Christian ministry *generally* is, however, to be carefully distinguished from the apostolical descent, *in an unbroken line*, of this or that *individual minister*. There is not a minister in all Christendom, who is able to trace up with any approach to certainty his own spiritual pedigree. The sacramental virtue (for such

is implied, whether the term be used or not, in the principle) dependent on the imposition of hands, with a due observance of apostolical usages, by a bishop, himself duly consecrated and previously rightly ordained deacon and priest, and rightly baptized, this sacramental virtue, if a single link of the chain be faulty, must, on the above principle, be utterly nullified ever after, in respect of all the links that hang on that one. And wholly to exclude such irregularity, during the long period usually designated as the dark ages, would have required a perpetual miracle; and that no such miraculous interference existed we have even historical proof, in the recorded descriptions, not only of the profound ignorance and profligacy of life of many of the clergy during those ages, but also of the grossest irregularities in respect of discipline and form. To suppose the occurrence of a perpetual miracle in this case, when no such miraculous interference came in to secure the "apostolical succession" of right faith and right conduct, is to represent Christianity as *mainly a system of outward ordinances;* and to compel alike those who believe and those who disbelieve the plea, to come eventually to the conclusion that, what some regard as its essentials, a Christian faith, and a Christian heart, are comparatively a small part of it.

In the case of the books of the Old Testament, we have a remarkable proof of their genuineness. They could never have been forged by *Christians* at all, because they are preserved and highly reverenced by the unbelieving *Jews* in various parts of the world at this day; although these books contain what appear, to Christians, most remarkable prophecies of Jesus, whom the Jews reject. These are the Scriptures which the *Jews* at Berea were commended for searching with diligent care, and the consequence of which

searching we are told, was, that "many of them believed." Yet, though the people who lived in the times of the Apostles had seen these prophecies so far fulfilled in Jesus, as to afford good reason for receiving Him, we have an advantage over them in seeing the more complete fulfilment of the prophecies that have since taken place. For instance, that a religion should arise among the Jews, which would have a wide spread among the Gentiles, but yet that it should be a *new* religion, not the same as taught by Moses; and that this religion should spring, not from the whole nation, but from one individual of that nation, and he a person despised, rejected, and persecuted even to death, by his own people. All this, which is so unlike what any one would have foretold from mere guess, and which we see actually come to pass, is prophesied in books, which enemies of Christianity (the unbelieving Jews of this day) reverence as divinely inspired.

And the proof from these prophecies is made very much the stronger by the *number of distinct particulars* which they mention; some of them seeming, at first sight, at variance with each other; but all of them agreeing with what has really taken place. Such a prophecy is like a complicated *lock*, with many and intricate wards, when you have found a key that opens it. An ordinary simple lock may be fitted by several different keys, that were not made for it: just as a loose general kind of prediction — of the coming of some great conqueror, or the like,—may have been made by guess; and may be found to agree with several different events. But the more numerous and complicated are the wards of a lock, the more certain you are that a key which exactly fits it must be the right key; and that one of them, the key or the lock, must have been made for the other. And so it is with prophecies that contain many distinct, and seemingly

opposite particulars, when we see the event fulfilling all those particulars.

The Jewish people, in their present condition, are a kind of standing miracle; being a monument of the wonderful fulfilment of the most extraordinary prophecies that were ever delivered; which prophecies they themselves preserve and bear witness to, though they shut their eyes to the fulfilment of them. No other account than this of the present state, and past history, of the Jews ever has been, or can be, given, that is not open to objections greater than all the objections put together, that have ever been brought against Christianity.

The testimony — whether positive or negative — of adversaries and of indifferent persons is generally regarded to have great weight; and the historic details, wonderful and miraculous as they are, of the Christian Scriptures are not without this important evidence of their truth. Not only have they the confirmatory negative testimony of the uncontradiction of their statements, though publicly put forth and generally known, but they have also the positive testimony of opponents. It is clear from the fragments remaining of the ancient arguments against Christianity, and the allusions to them in Christian writers, and also from the Jewish accounts of the life of Jesus, which are still extant, under the title of Toldoth Jeschu, that the original opponents of Christianity admitted that the miracles were wrought, but denied that they proved the divine origin of the religion, and attributed them to magic. It is remarkable that in this book, Toldoth Jeschu, one, and only one, of the alleged miracles is denied; so closely does it agree, in this respect, with our Sacred Writers, who describe the unbelieving Jews as deny-

ing the fact of Christ's resurrection, but admitting the other miracles, and ascribing them to the agency of evil spirits. The prevailing notion among the ancients seems to have been, that a magician's power, however great, lasted only for his *life*. The resurrection, therefore, of Jesus utterly overthrew, in the minds of those who were convinced of the fact, a supposition of his being a magician. Now the Toldoth Jeschu must have been compiled (at whatever period) from *traditions existing from the very first;* for it is incredible that if those contemporaries of Jesus who opposed Him had denied the fact of the miracles having been wrought, their descendants should have admitted the facts, and resorted to the hypothesis of magic. And this admission of persons living so much nearer the time assigned to the miracles, is a most important evidence; for, credulous as men were in those days respecting magic, they would hardly have resorted to this explanation, unless some, at least plausible, evidence for the miracles had been adduced; and they could not but be sensible that to prove (had that been possible) the pretended miracles to be *impostures*, would have been the most decisive course; since this would at once have disproved the religion.

The admission by unbelievers of old of the miracles which attest the Christian religion, while denying that a religion so attested was from God, is remarkable as a reverse of what is the case in modern times, when persons have been found, who, while professing themselves believers in Christianity, represent the disciples (how they *came to be* disciples these persons do not tell us) as having been led by zeal for their Master's honour, to exaggerate and misrepresent some of the occurrences which they record, and to invent others. The sick persons, for instance, healed by Him, they represent as having *accidentally* recovered just at the time when they

were brought to Him. His walking on the water was, they tell us, merely a mode of expressing that He *waded* along a shallow portion of the lake! And the five thousand were fed, not with the bread distributed to them by the disciples, but with what some of themselves had brought with them; which, on that supposition, must have amounted to about *fifty hundred-weight;* a quantity too conspicuous, certainly, to have admitted of any deception.

All this would be simply ridiculous, from its excessive absurdity, if it were not so profanely presumptuous. And yet men are to be found, professedly at least, believing such things, and, all the while, imagining themselves not credulous!

Then, again, come others, who sweep away with merited contempt all this tissue of extravagance, and declare that all the miraculous accounts in the Gospels were invented in the third or fourth century, after the religion had been firmly established in men's minds, and when it was received with such reverential awe, that stories of miracles connected with it were received with ready credence.

These theologians (for such they call themselves) forget that they have substituted for those absurd interpretations which they discard, another absurdity quite equal to any of them. They tell us of what they suppose happened in *the Christian world*, when the Gospel had been fully established; but they forget to tell us *how* it came to be established!

Suppose some historian maintaining that the vast armies which Napoleon Buonaparte is described as bringing into the field, and his prodigious trains of artillery, and his wonderful victories, are far beyond the bounds of credibility, and are to be set down as legendary fables, or what are in modern times called *myths;* and adding, that these splendid legends were gradually invented, and more and more exaggerated, in

order to do honour to this Napoleon, *after* he had attained an empire, he having raised himself from a very humble station to that empire, and subjugated the greater part of Europe, at the head of a handful of *unarmed* followers, and without fighting any battles at all. If any one were supposed serious in maintaining such a theory, he would be reckoned an idiot or a madman. And yet such silly credulity has its parallel in that of those who, while rejecting the evidence of miracles, must believe that Christ and His Apostles did, without any superhuman powers, what we have the best reason for thinking no man without such powers could do, and what, certainly, without such powers, no other men, in like circumstances, have ever done. That a handful of Jewish peasants and fishermen should undertake to abolish the religion of the whole civilized world, and introduce a new one, in defiance of all the prejudices and all the power of this world arrayed against them;—that they should think to effect this by pretending to miraculous powers which they did not, and knew they did not, possess;— and that they should succeed in the attempt;—all this is, surely, many times more incredible than anything recorded in the Scriptures. For extraordinary, and in themselves improbable, as are the miraculous circumstances, all of them put together are as nothing in point of strangeness compared with the only alternative; with what must be believed by any one who should, therefore, resolve to reject these miraculous narratives.

Is it not, *cæteris paribus*, a greater effort of faith to *expect* a miracle beforehand, than to believe in the narrative of a past one? For in this latter case there is, on the opposite side, the difficulty, whatever it may be, of accounting for a *false* narrative of a matter of fact; whereas, in regard to what is future, how much sooner some may *expect* it, then

expectation is a matter of *opinion*. And a groundless expectation or other opinion, is, as a general rule, less strong than a groundless narrative. And yet many there have been who have professed to disbelieve, or to reject all miraculous narratives, and many more who find in these their chief difficulty, yet possess a firm expectation, unencumbered by any sense of difficulty, of the *greatest of all miracles*,—a future life.

Parallels have been drawn by Hume, in his *Essay on Miracles*, and by writers professing themselves Christians, between the miracles recorded in the New Testament, and those in the legends of pretended saints, which last were received, just as counterfeit coin is, from its resemblance to genuine.

The credibility of the New Testament Scriptures is established not alone by external evidence, but by *internal* marks of truth — by those peculiarities which distinguish the Christian revelation, alike from natural religion and all pretended revelations. Some few of these internal evidences, derived from the characteristics of the Scriptures themselves, may be thus summed up :—

I. Not one of the books of the New Testament is attributed to Jesus himself; had there been any forgery, the forged books, or at least the principal of them, would naturally have been put forth as written by the very founder of the new religion, laying down the principles and precepts of that religion, and answering to the books of the law written by Moses.

II. The omission of the title of Christians as applied by the earliest Christians to themselves, proving the antiquity of the books. The term, which was manifestly of Roman

origin, occurs but three times in the New Testament; and in each case, manifestly, as employed by those who were not Christians. This fact, (however it is to be accounted for, or whether we can account for it at all or not,) is one that would alone be a sufficient disapproval of the notion of some daring speculators, that the New Testament writings were composed in the second, third, or fourth century, from some vague floating traditions, and then, fathered upon the apostles and evangelists by fraud, carelessness, and ignorance. Had this been the case, the title of "Christians," which was then in as common use as it is now, would undoubtedly have been found in the books of the New Testament, in its present application by Christians to each other. This omission, then, alone furnishes, even to a plain unlearned reader, a complete proof of their antiquity. And the anxiety of infidels to disprove that *antiquity*, shows plainly how they despair of contending, in any other way, against their *truth*. Such books could never possibly, if false, have been circulated without detection, at the very time when the wonderful events related in them, are described as occurring.

III. The character of Jesus himself, as drawn by the Evangelists. It is quite unlike all that had ever before appeared, or been described, or imagined; and the picture is evidently an *unstudied* one. There is nothing in it of the nature of eulogium and panegyric.

IV. The brief, calm, unadorned style in which the miracles and sufferings of Jesus and his apostles are narrated; and the candid and frank simplicity with which the weakness and faults of the disciples are described.

V. The clear revelation of a future state, and the promise of eternal life through the resurrection of the body.

VI. The different nature of that kingdom of heaven,

proclaimed by our Lord and the apostles, from that glorious worldly empire which the Jews expected; and the total absence of all attempt to accommodate the doctrines to the prejudices, or to flatter the pride, of the Jews, by holding out hopes of national or spiritual supremacy.

VII. The absolute requisition of a morality stricter and superior in kind to any hitherto practised, or even approved; and by this opposition, not merely to men's natural inclinations, but also in some points to their ideas of what is praiseworthy, proving the utter incredibility of mere ordinary human beings contriving a religion which condemns not only men's *conduct* but their principles.

VIII. The mode by which that morality is inculcated, so peculiar, 1st, in the motives supplied; 2ndly, in the examples proposed; 3rdly, in the precepts delivered.

IX. The omission not merely, but the exclusion, of any sacrifice save that offered up by the founder of the religion in his own person; of any sacrificing priest (Hiereus or Sacerdos) except Him, the great and true High Priest, and consequently the exclusion of any priest, in that sense, on earth; except so far as every one of the worshippers was required to present himself as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God;" and the exclusion of any temple, except the collected congregation of the worshippers themselves. When it is remembered that the Gospel religion was introduced by men and among men, whether Jews or Pagans, that had never heard of, or conceived, such a thing as a religion without priest, sacrifice, altar, or temple, is it credible that Christianity should have been without them, if it had been invented by men?

X. The practical character of the revelation, and the careful avoidance of all that could serve to mere speculative knowledge or the gratification of curiosity, however natural

or excusable, the ministering to which is a marked characteristic of all other religious systems.

These characteristics, and many others that might be pointed out, would be very remarkable if met with in any *one* book; but it is still more so when it is considered that they run through all the books of the New Testament, which are no less than twenty-seven distinct compositions, of several different kinds, written apparently at considerable intervals of time from each other, and which have come down to us as the works of no less than eight different authors. Infidels may reasonably be called upon to explain how, if Christianity be the invention of man, the Christian Scriptures the production of uninspired men, it comes to pass that they *differ* so materially from all other religions invented by man, and all pretended revelations put forward by man. And when they ask, is it likely that Christianity came from God? they may be fairly met with the question, is it likely that Christianity came from man? And the latter is much the fairer and more rational kind of enquiry, because we are much better able to judge what might reasonably be expected from man than from God. For human nature is our own nature, "but God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts like our thoughts." It is much safer, consequently, to argue that Christianity did not come from man because it is not such as might reasonably be expected from man, than to argue that it did not come from God because it seems to us not such in all respects as the Deity would be likely to deliver to us.

The dependence of the unlearned on the learned for translations of Scripture, is very far from amounting to a submissive reliance on *their word*, for all that Scripture contains and for the very existence of the Sacred Books.

On the contrary, the known existence of several distinct, and even *rival*, versions of the Scriptures into English and many other modern languages, all substantially agreeing where there could not have been any concert, — all, even the most imperfect, exhibiting all the main facts and doctrines of our religion,—this affords to the unlearned reader a perfectly good ground for his acceptance of that religion, and a ground quite independent of any implicit reliance on the good faith and on the wisdom of the translators. All these translations, in short, are in the condition of witnesses placed in a witness-box in a court of justice; examined and cross-examined by friends and enemies, and brought face to face with each other, so as to make it certain that any falsehood or mistake will be brought to light. Thus the strongest possible evidence of the general fidelity and trustworthiness of the translations of the Bible which they read, is afforded to unlearned Christians in a free country, where, every man being allowed to publish his sentiments on religious matters, any attempt to palm off a false translation of the Scriptures, would be immediately detected and exposed. It is just the same sort of evidence as that on which you believe that the earth is round, or that there is such a city as Paris, though you may have never been at Paris, nor ever sailed round the world.

The prevalence of figurative language in Sacred Writers, may be regarded as something exhibiting marks of design. It is a remarkable circumstance, that a figurative style is perfectly retained in translation, in which every other excellence of expression is liable to be lost. It may be said with truth, that the book most necessary to translate into every language is chiefly characterized by that kind of excellence in diction which is least impaired by translation.

In the Scriptures we have, as it were, a lasting picture of the Spirit of Truth, which we must consult in order that we may recognize Him, and reject false appearances.

It is not in the Holy Scriptures alone that the Holy Ghost is present with the Church; but it is by them, as a test, that his presence is in each case to be known. Whatever suggests to us anything not agreeable to God's written word, we may be sure is not from Him.

He who studies the Scriptures is consulting the Spirit of Truth; and if he would hope for His aid, must remember this, and search honestly and earnestly for the truth.

All Scripture is in itself invulnerable; and they who attack it, do but dash themselves to pieces against a rock.

Christian conduct must be founded on Faith — a faith drawn from the Scriptures; supported by Hope — a hope based on the Scriptures; and guided by Charity— a charity learned from the Scriptures.

The Scriptures venerated, yet not used, are no longer like the daily shower of manna to supply daily wants, but the pot of manna stored up with reverent care in the ark, as a curiosity.

He who should think to make a voyage in safety, by having on board the ship a chart of the coasts he was to pass, shut up in a chest and never consulted, or, if taken out, merely glanced at, without any attempt to understand it, or to steer his course by it, would not be more a madman or an idiot than is the possessor of a Bible that he never reads, or

reads at certain stated times, without endeavouring to learn anything from it, or to apply it to his own improvement. To such, the words of Scripture, whether in a strange language, or in his own, are no more than empty sounds, or mere black marks on white paper.

The stream of religious knowledge should be continually traced up to the pure fountain-head, the living waters of the Scriptures.

The admission of the necessity of human teaching, and the deference due to the judgment of the learned and pious, is quite consistent with the demand of Scripture proof. A town-clock is of excellent use in making publicly known with authority the correct time — making it known to many who, perhaps, at no time, and certainly not at all times, would find it convenient to verify its correctness for themselves. And yet it is clear, that one who maintained the great use and importance of having such a clock, would not be in the least inconsistent, if he also maintained that it might possibly go astray, and if he inculcated the necessity of frequently comparing it with, and regulating it by, the dial which receives its light from heaven.

Offering to the people proof of doctrines from the works of the Fathers — works mostly untranslated, and far too voluminous for above one person in a hundred thousand to master—is something like offering to pay a large bill of exchange in farthings, which, you know, it would be intolerably troublesome to count or carry.

By "ancient" some persons understand what belongs to the first *three* centuries of the Christian era; some, the first *four;* some, *seven*; — so arbitrary and uncertain is the

standard by which some, who tell us that we are bound to seek for a distinct authoritative sanction in some ancient writings, some tradition, would persuade us to try questions on which they, at the same time, teach us to believe our Christian Faith and Christian Hope are staked.

> "Scire velim, pretium chartis quotus arroget annus;
> * * * * * *
> Est vetus atque probus, centum qui perfecit annos.
> Quid? qui deperiit minor uno mense vel anno,
> Inter quos referendus erit? veterisne?" . . .
>
> Horace, *Epist.*, i., b. 2.

To interpret the less known by the better known is reasonable; but to reverse the process, as is done in interpreting the Scriptures by the writings of the Ancient Fathers, is as if a naturalist should take a fossil elephant as a standard by which to correct and modify the description of the animal now existing among us.

The tendency to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, and to acquiesce in such teachings, is not the effect, but the cause, of their being taken for the commandments of God.

The implicit deference due to the declarations and precepts of Holy Scripture, is due to *nothing else.*

Tradition is not the *interpreter of Scripture*, but Scripture is the interpreter of tradition. What has come down to us for tradition, if agreeable to Scripture, is to be received; if opposed to it, to be rejected; if neither, is to be left in uncertainty.

It is a foolish thing to say that tradition is to be held to, rather than Scripture, *because* tradition was before Scrip-

ture; since Scripture (that is, written records) were used on purpose, after tradition had been tried, to guard against the uncertainties of mere tradition. Thus Luke tells Theophilus that he had written an account of our Lord's life and teaching, that Theophilus "might know the certainty (the exact state of the case) of those things wherein he had been instructed." And John and Paul, upon two occasions (John xxiii. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 1—5), correct false reports (that is, traditions), which had gone abroad among Christians even in their own day.

To believe that the Apostles would leave the *essentials* of *Christianity* to be collected from *incidental allusions*, or from *doubtful traditions* quite inaccessible to the generality of Christians, and about which the learned few are far from being agreed, is surely not to show reverence for them, either as inspired servants of God, or even as men of ordinary good sense.

To found faith on an appeal to tradition, is to base it on the *report of a report of a report of a report.*

Discussions, one sometimes meets with, as to the "credibility of tradition" generally, are as idle as Hume's respecting the credit due to *testimony*. One might as well enquire, "What degree of regard should be paid to books?" as common sense would dictate in reply, "What book?" so also, "Whose testimony? what tradition?" As each particular testimony and each particular book, just so, should each alleged tradition be examined on its own merits.

Many defend oral tradition on the ground that we have the Scriptures themselves by tradition. Would they think

that because they might trust servants to deliver a letter, however long or important, therefore they might trust them to deliver its contents by word of mouth in a message? A footman brings you a letter from a friend, upon whose word you can perfectly rely, giving an account of something that has happened to himself, and the exact account of which you are greatly concerned to know. While you are reading and answering the letter, the footman goes into the kitchen, and there gives your cook an account of the same thing; which, he says, he overheard the upper-servants at home talking over, as related to them by the valet, who said he had it from your friend's son's own lips.

The distinction attempted to be set up between co-ordinate and subordinate tradition is but a fallacious one; the real difference being only that every usurped and arbitrary power is usually *exercised with comparative leniency at first.* Let but the *principle* which is common to both systems be established, and the one may easily be made to answer all the purposes of the other.

Tradition and Church Interpretation are made by a certain system, subordinate to, and dependent on, Scripture, much as some parasite plants are dependent on the tree, that supports them, gradually overspreading it with their own foliage, till by little and little they weaken and completely smother it.

"Miraturque novas frondes, et non sua poma."

As a man directed to take *two* medicines, as being both essential for his health, would most likely not take the pains to *analyze* the *one*, when it was out of his power to analyze the *other;* but would rather take his physician's word for

both, — or at once reject both: so those, who blindly and uninquiringly trust to a human spiritual guide, will be induced to take his word for everything alike.

Some advocates of authoritative tradition who, while loudly proclaiming that they do not require assent to anything that may not be proved by Scripture, would yet have us receive a point of faith on *their* word and on *their* conviction that it is Scriptural, act in the same way, and produce the same effect, that a Government would do that should make a paper currency legal tender, and require belief of the existence and amount of the represented bullion on hand, and of its ability to produce it, not on the test of payment demanded and obtained, but on its own word — the word of the very Government issuing this paper currency; which thus made inconvertible would supersede the precious metals, till they gradually disappear and leave nothing but a profusion of worthless paper.

The Christian minister should ever remember, that the Apostles and Evangelists can teach Christianity better than he can, and carefully lead his flock to the study of *their* writings. He should instruct them, to the best of his ability, out of the Scriptures. He should teach them to search the Scriptures for themselves to see "whether those things be so," which they shall have heard from him; and should warn them to trust in God, and not to transfer their allegiance to any uninspired man, and should caution them against being led away, by bold assertions and arrogant pretensions, into those corruptions of Gospel truth, which will always, from time to time, be found arising within the Church. So shall they be enabled to "take up the serpents" they will meet

with, and "if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them."

The fact that the Scriptures contain things hard to be understood, is no reason for laying them aside, but a very strong one for taking the more pains to understand them.

If the Scriptures could properly be understood without any trouble, and could not be perverted to bad purposes, they would be extremely unlike the rest of God's gifts.

As the laws of nature are in themselves invariable, but yet are sometimes imperfectly known and sometimes mistaken by natural philosophers, so the Scriptures are intrinsically infallible, but do not impart infallibility to the student of them. To complain of this, — to reject or undervalue the revelation God has bestowed, urging that it is no revelation to us, or an insufficient one, because unerring certainty is not bestowed also — because we are required to exercise patient diligence, and watchfulness, and candour, and humble self-distrust,—this would be as unreasonable as to disparage and reject the bountiful gift of eye-sight, because men's eyes have sometimes deceived them; — because men have mistaken a picture for the object imitated, or a mirage of the desert for a lake; and have fancied they had the evidence of sight for the sun's motion; and to infer from all this that we ought to blind ourselves, and be led henceforth by some guide, who pretends to be himself not liable to such deceptions.

Peter's implied *censure* of those who are unlearned (that is, ill acquainted with truths revealed in the Bible), and, as will naturally follow, "unstable," and likely to be "blown about with every wind of doctrine," should operate as a

caution, not against the study of the Scriptures, but against the faults which would lead us to wrest them to our destruction.

Any suggestion or persuasion that the Scriptures need not be read, or that the right interpretation of them requires no diligent care, and that we have such an infallible guide within us, or that some boastful pretender has such, as does away the necessity of candid, humble, patient study of the Bible, or that we are at liberty to receive, or reject, or alter the sense of each passage, in conformity with what seems to our minds reasonable or not, in the same manner as when we are reading the work of any human writer; every such suggestion comes from the proud and disobedient spirit who would lead us to imitate his presumptuous rebellion. Faith in ourselves, faith in the pretensions of man, are the very opposite to Christian faith, which is faith in God only.

If we receive the heavenly light of God's Word, through the discoloured medium of our own prejudices and infirmities, its rays will give an unnatural tinge to everything on which they are shed, confirming, it may be, preconceived notions, or leading to false conclusions.

To find in a passage of Scripture an argument in favour of a doctrine, is a very different thing from finding in it a revelation of the doctrine.

We should search the Scriptures, not to *defend* our opinions, but to *form* them; not merely for *argument* but for *truth*.

An erroneous doctrine may *sometimes* spring from the misinterpretation of a text of Scripture, oftener the misinterpretation from the doctrine.

It is one thing to desire to have Scripture on our side, and another thing to desire to be on the side of Scripture.

The passages quoted from Scripture in behalf of some practice, are often *excuses*, and not *reasons* for it.

Many and various are the objections (some of them more or less plausible, and others very weak), that have been brought — on grounds of science, or supposed science — against the Mosaic accounts of the creation, of the state of the early world, and of the flood. And when answering these objections, it is important to lay down the *principles* on which either the Bible, or any other writing or speech, ought to be studied and understood, namely, with a reference to the object proposed by the writer or speaker. For example, if we bid any one proceed in a straight line from one place to another, and to take care to arrive before the sun goes down, he will rightly and fully understand us in reference to the practical object which alone we had in view. Now we know that there cannot really be *a straight line* on the surface of the earth; and that the sun does not really go down; but whether the other party knows all this or not, matters nothing to our present object, which was not to teach mathematics or astronomy, but to make him conform to our directions, which are equally intelligible to the learned and the unlearned.

Now the object of the Scripture revelation is to teach men not astronomy, or geology, or any other physical science, but Religion.

In what relates to Divine Revelations, reason should be confined to those two points: — 1st, to judge of the grounds on which any professed revelation should be received or re-

jected, as being "from heaven or of men;" and, 2ndly, to determine what it is that we are enabled and required to learn from the revelation which God has actually given.

Men are too apt to treat Scripture as the poor dupes of Medea did their aged parent, in hopes of making him come out of the cauldron with increased vigour. They chop it up into separate texts, and stew it with the poisonous weeds of human speculation, in hopes of their producing a complete and beautiful *body* of divinity.

The object of revelation is to teach religion, properly so called, which does not consist in the knowledge of human nature in itself, or of the divine nature in itself, but in the knowledge — and the practical application of the knowledge — of God in relation to man, and man in relation to God. To go beyond this, is to teach "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ."

It is an important general rule in interpreting Scripture, that the most practical interpretation is ever likely to be the truest. In the precepts as well as the parables of Scripture, it is to the *practical result* that the attention is intended to be directed. For instance, this is the case even in the precept to "love thy neighbour as thyself;" for it is only figuratively that a man is said to *love* himself; the regard which he has for his own happiness being not in *degree* merely, but in *kind* very different from any benevolent affections towards another; but the force of the precept is, that *as* we diligently seek to promote our own welfare without having any further object in view, so we ought also diligently to promote the

welfare of others, looking to nothing beyond. And this is practically sufficient.

Amid all our ignorance and weakness what we best know is our duty.

As the peasant who may be utterly ignorant respecting the progress of germination in the seed which he sows, the growth of the plant and its fructification, may yet have practical knowledge sufficient to enable him to prepare the soil for the seed, to raise the corn, and to gather in the harvest; or as the ancient mariners steered their course in safety by those heavenly bodies whose magnitude, and distance, and motions they so imperfectly understood; so also may the Word of God be a lantern to our steps, and "a light unto our path," even though we may have but a very imperfect understanding of the divine dispensation.

If none of the doctrines necessary to be revealed for *other* practical purposes, were of sufficiently mysterious character to serve also for trials of faith, humility, and candour, in assenting to them on sufficient grounds, (a purpose which, as producing moral results, may be fairly reckoned a worthy and fit purpose, and a practical one,) we might then, perhaps, expect that some things should be proposed to our belief, solely and singly for this latter purpose. But if both objects can be fully accomplished by the same revelation — if our faith be sufficiently tried by the admission of such mysterious doctrines as are important for other practical ends also — then the revelation of any further mysteries, which lead to no such practical end, is the less necessary, and consequently the less to be expected. So that an exclusively practical character, is a probable mark of a true revelation.

All pretended revelations which have been the basis of distinct religions, and all corruptions of Christianity, all systems of religion — whether Pagan or Mahomedan, and all modifications of our own, however dissimilar they may be in other respects, however they may differ in the greater or less absurdity, or the greater or less immorality of their fables, legends and traditions; in the number of them or the degree of credit they obtain — all agree in this one general characteristic, the general want of reference to human conduct, and in the leading, or, at least, one leading, object being to gratify human curiosity, to minister to that desire of knowledge for its own sake without any reference to its utility, which is obviously a part of our nature. An ancient writer who well understood human nature, justly observes that things *hidden*, and things *admirable*, are what men especially covet to know. Now nothing can be more hidden, nothing more admirable than the nature and the works of God. The origin and constitution of the world we inhabit — of man himself, the nature of angels and of various orders of beings which may exist, superior to man, — and of the Supreme Being Himself; each of these subjects suggests innumerable matters of enquiry whose grandeur fills the most exalted, and whose difficulty baffles the most intelligent mind. Again, nothing could have been more deeply interesting than minute details of everything relating to the life of our great Master, however little connected with his ministry — such as his personal appearance, his domestic habits, and all particulars relative to his parents. Is it not then natural, that men should eagerly seek for some superhuman means of information on subjects so interesting to their curiosity, and so much beyond their unaided powers? And is it not consequently to be expected, that both the devices of an impostor, and the visions of an enthusiast should abound in food for

this curiosity? What then is in this respect the character of the Christian revelation? It stands distinguished from all other religions, and even from all modifications of itself in its exclusively practical character, and its omission of everything that would serve merely to pamper vain curiosity. We have in the contrast thus presented in the wisdom and dignified simplicity of the Scriptures with the idle and arrogant pretensions of human fraud and folly, a plain proof that our Scriptures were *not* of man's devising, that no impostor *would*, and no enthusiast *could*, have written them. Praised be the superhuman wisdom that has thus proved the divine origin of the Scriptures! for what cannot have come from man must have come from God.

When Paul describes the Gospel as being "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness," he supplies a practical rule wherewith to test any representation of it. Whenever, then, such a representation of Christianity is made, as would *not* have been a "stumbling-block to the Jews," or such as would *not* have been "foolishness to the Greeks," it may at once be concluded that *this cannot be the Gospel which Paul preached.*

He who would be of those who (in the words of the apostle Peter) "desire as new-born babes the sincere (unadulterated) milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby:" he who would learn the very Gospel which the apostles taught, just as it was received by their hearers, must in heart and spirit accompany the simple shepherds in their visit to Bethlehem to "see," not what human philosophy has devised, but—what "the Lord hath made known unto us."

Doctrines, whether true or false, that are not revealed in Scripture, can constitute no part of the Christian faith; and

those who teach them as Gospel truths are answerable for the effects produced, not only on those who adopt the opinions, but also on those who reject them.

The question concerning the Origin of Evil is left by the Scriptures just where they found it. They neither introduce the difficulty, as some weak opponents contend, nor account for it, as is imagined by some not less weak advocates; who having undertaken to explain it, and having, perhaps, satisfied themselves and others that they have done so, are sure to be met by the very same difficulty re-appearing in some different form; like a resistless stream, which when one of its channels is dammed up, immediately forces its way through another. He who professes to account for the existence of Evil by tracing it up to the *first* evil recorded as occurring, would have no reason to deride the absurdity of an atheist who should profess to account for the origin of the human race, by simply tracing them up to the first pair.

It is a folly to regard the difficulty as to the origin of Evil in the light of an *objection*, *either* to our religion or to any other; since it would lie equally against all, as indeed it does against any system of philosophy likewise; for the ancient heathen were as much perplexed with doubts as to the origin of evil as we are. Even atheism does not lessen, it only alters, the difficulty; for as the believer in a God cannot account for the existence of evil, so the believer in *no* God cannot account for the existence of good; or, indeed, for anything at all that bears marks of rational design.

The Bible acts the part of a judicious physician, who, instead of entertaining his patients with a long and curious dissertation on the nature and origin of their disease, employs

himself in actively administering remedies, and teaching them how to avoid them. Just so the Apostle Paul does not attempt to explain, *e. g.*, to the Athenians the cause of the principal evil, the state of emnity against God, and exposure to divine displeasure, but proceeds at once to the practical point of describing the evil, and offering the cure. — "The times of this ignorance God winketh at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

To distort the plain meaning of Scripture, for the sake of defending religion against unsound objections, is to expose it to more powerful ones, which we have left ourselves without the means of answering.

The true sense of each word is *that which is understood by it;* and as a reader will naturally conclude a writer's meaning to be just what his words express in their simple, ordinary, and obvious sense, (except when some other passage from the same writer is produced, showing that his opinion was something different,) so, in interpreting Scripture, we are not to consider what sense the words can be *brought to* bear, but what sense they *actually* bore to the very hearers of Christ and his apostles, which we may be sure was that which they meant to convey, as being that in which they knew that the hearers understood them.

The interpretation of any particular word occurring in Scripture, must not be dwelt upon so as to imply that each term must have, like one of the technical terms of any science, exactly the same meaning in every passage where it is employed. The words of the Sacred Writers are popular, not *scientific.*

What was to the early Christians of plain common sense and moderate education, the natural and unstrained sense of the writings and discourses of the Apostles and Evangelists, whose works have come down to us, as what we should seek to understand and to believe, if we would have our *faith the same as theirs*. If later Christians had been satisfied humbly to pursue *this* study, instead of human theories; if Christian instructors had sought to fit themselves to explain, not those things concerning God which the Scriptures *omit*, but what they *contain*,— not what God has thought fit to keep secret, but what He has revealed,— there would have been less of what is reckoned abstruse theology, but more of pure Christian faith. Had they all thus honestly relied on Scripture, the mysterious doctrines of our religion would have been received in Christian simplicity, as Scripture reveals them, without any farther definitions and explanations than Scripture itself supplies; and this would have been "able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." But for vain philosophical systems of divinity, heresies would, probably, not have been multiplied as they have been. This, at least, is certain, that as scientific theories and technical phraseology gained ground, party animosity raged the more violently. Those who lose sight of the real character and design of the *Christian revelation*, generally lose the mild, patient, and forbearing *spirit* of the Gospel. "The servant of the Lord," says the Apostle, "must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."

Whenever we approach, in imagination, the mighty Lord of all things, humbled, and become an infant lying in the manger, we should be reminded to "desire the sincere milk

of the Word, that we may grow thereby;" and that, receiving "the kingdom of heaven as a little child," with a pure, and humble, and teachable mind, we may, at his second coming to judge the world, be found an acceptable people in his sight.

So limited are our faculties for comprehending things as they are in themselves, that did not the Scriptures present dim and faint pictures of them, they could not otherwise be revealed at all. The "light which no man can approach unto," if presented, in unmitigated blaze, to eyes too weak to endure it, would blind instead of enlightening; we now "see by means of the reflection of a glass," what we could not otherwise see at all.

As analogy is the resemblance of ratios (or relations), two things may be connected by analogy, though they have in *themselves* no *resemblance;* thus as a sweet taste gratifies the palate, so does a sweet sound gratify the ear, and hence the same word, "sweet," is applied to both, though no flavour can resemble a sound in itself. To bear this in mind would serve to guard us against two very common errors in the interpretations of the analogical language of Scripture. 1. The error of supposing the things themselves to be similar, from their bearing similar relations to other things. 2. The still more common error of supposing the analogy to extend further than it does, or to be more complete than it really is, from not considering *in what* the analogy in each case consists.

The only truth essential in a Parable, is the truth of the moral or doctrine contained in it.

Parables commonly use the analogy the most remote in all points but the one to be illustrated, on purpose to guard against following out analogy too far: so unjust judge, unjust steward, unkind neighbor, asked to lend three loaves.

The picture and image of heavenly things, furnished by the analogical language and the types and figures of revelation, cannot in all points completely correspond with the original, any more than a picture can, in all respects, resemble the solid body which it is designed to imitate.

To interpret too literally the analogical expression with which Scripture teaches, just as a blind man is instructed about sight and the objects of sight by comparing them with the other senses and their objects, is as absurd as to *dissect a statue* in order to find out what the inside of a man is like.

When Paul says, respecting the glorified state, "whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away," we might have expected him, perhaps, to promise rather an increase of our knowledge; but it appeared to him, probably, that the knowledge we now possess concerning several points not fully comprehensible to us, is so utterly *different in kind* from that which is reserved for us, that the change might more probably be called an entire *vanishing* of the notions we are at present able to form, and a substitution of others in their place; just as the analogical notions of seeing a blind man had formed, would, on his obtaining sight, fade away, and be succeeded by others incomparably more direct and clear.

The apparent contradictions in the doctrinal and moral precepts of Scripture are not to be regarded merely as diffi-

culties to be surmounted, but as a mode of instruction peculiar to it — the employing of different analogies, each, severally, serving to correct the other, and all, jointly, conveying a notion as nearly as possible approaching the reality.

The liability, so prevalent in all men, to imagine that a literal obedience to certain definite precepts is all that is required, is guarded against by the mode of conveying moral instruction adopted by our Lord. First, the precepts are often apparently contradictory to each other; secondly, they are often such that a literal compliance would be, in many cases, either *impossible*, or at least extravagant and irrational; and thirdly, this literal compliance would, in many instances, amount to so insignificant a point of duty, as could not be supposed deserving of a distinct inculcation for its own sake. Men are thus thrown on the application of a general principle to each particular case; for a literal compliance with precepts which, literally taken, are *inconsistent*, would be *impossible;* where that literal compliance would be *wrong* or *absurd*, it is manifest it could not be *intended;* where it would be *trifling*, it is manifest that it cannot be *all* that is intended.

Two apparently opposite passages of Scripture may together enable us to direct our faith or our practice aright, as, in mechanics, the combined effect of several impulses in various directions will propel a body in the direction required.

When the Mosaic code was abolished, the Lord and His Apostles did not substitute in its place any other *system of rules;* they laid down Christian *principles;* they sought to implant Christian *dispositions*. And this is the more remarkable, inasmuch, as we may be sure, from the nature of Man,

that precise regulations, even though somewhat tedious to learn and burdensome to observe, would have been highly acceptable to their converts. It is much more agreeable to the natural Man (though at first sight the contrary might be supposed) to have a complete system of laws laid down, which are to be observed according to the letter, not to the spirit,—and which, as long as a man adheres to them, afford both a consolatory assurance of safety, and an unrestrained liberty as to every point not determined by them, — than to be left to his own discretion, no restraint being so irksome to him as this, while still required to regulate his conduct according to certain principles, and to steer his course through the intricate channels of life, with an incessant watchfulness and studious exercise of his moral judgment.

Accordingly, most, if not all systems of Man's devising (whether corruptions of Christianity, or built on any other foundation) will be found, even in what appear their most rigid enactments, to be accommodated to this tendency of the human heart; when Mahomet, for instance, enjoined on his disciples a strict fast during a certain period, and an entire abstinence from wine and from games of chance, and the devotion of a precise portion of their property to the poor, leaving them at liberty, generally, to follow their own sensual and worldly inclinations, he imposed a far less severe task on them than if he had required them constantly to control their appetites and passions, to repress covetousness, and to be uniformly temperate, charitable, and heavenly-minded. And had Paul been (as a false teacher always will be) disposed to comply with the expectations and wishes which his disciples would naturally form, he would doubtless have referred them to some part of the Mosaic Law as their standard of morality, or would have substituted some other system of rules in its place. Indeed, there is strong reason

to think (especially from what we find in 1st Corinthians) that Paul had been applied to for more precise rules than he was willing to give. After such brief directions as the occasion rendered indispensable, he breaks off into exhortations to "use this world as not abusing it;" and speedily recurs to the general description of the Christian character, and the inculcation of Christian principles. He will not be induced to enter into minute details of things forbidden and permitted, — enjoined and dispensed with; and even when most occupied in repelling the suspicions that Gospel-liberty exempts the Christian from moral obligation, instead of retaining or framing anew any system of prohibitions and injunctions, he urges upon his hearers the very consideration of their being exempt from any such childish trammels, as a reason for their aiming at a more perfect holiness of life, on purer and more generous motives; "Sin," he says, "shall not have diminion over you: for *ye are not under the law, but under grace;*" and he perpetually incites them to walk "worthy of their vocation," on the ground of their being "bought with a price," and bound to "live unto Him who died for them;" — "as risen with Christ" to a new life of holiness,—exhorted to "set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth;"—as "living sacrifices" to God; — as "the temple of the Holy Ghost," called upon to keep God's dwelling-place undefiled, and to abound in all "the fruits of the Spirit," and as "being delivered from the Law, that we should serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." These, and such as these, are the sublime principles of morality laid down by Paul, as everywhere in Scripture, into a conformity with which the Christian is required to fashion his heart and his life, through that most effectual aid and guidance of the Spirit of Truth, who will enable us daily to profit by the teaching of the Word of

Truth, to follow the example of Christ, and to purify ourselves even as He is pure; that "when He shall appear, we may be made like unto Him, and may behold Him as He is."

There are two things, each of which he will seldom fail to discover who seeks for it in earnest; the one, the knowledge of what he ought to do; and the other, a plausible pretext for doing what he likes. The latter of these the carnally-minded might find in any set of precepts that could have been framed, the former the spiritually-minded will not fail to obtain in the Gospel.

Wisely designed for the spiritual exercise and training of the Christian's mind as was the absence in the New Testament of a precise code of laws and the substitution of sublime principles, a not less striking instance of divine wisdom and goodness is presented to us in the absence of all formularies — the total omission of Liturgies, Catechisms and Creeds. Yet all these things we are sure must have existed. Now this omission is a fact which will appear the more remarkable, humanly speaking, the more the subject is considered. It is on all natural principles unaccountable, and, indeed, incredible, that none of the Apostles should have committed them to writing, or any of their numerous fellow-labourers, hundreds of whom must have been quite competent to the task, which would have been merely to write down what they heard, and once written they would be eagerly read, carefully preserved, and copied. Yet, what would have been seemingly so natural and so easy to do was done by *no one*. This or that individual might have been prevented from doing so by accidental circumstances; but that every one of some hundreds should have been so prevented amounts to a complete moral impossibility. And as the drawing up of

such records would have naturally occurred to men of any nation, situated as the Apostles and their companions were, so it seems doubly strange that this should not have occurred to *Jews*, — to men brought up under that *law* which prescribed, with such minute exactness, all the ceremonials of their worship, all the articles of their belief, and all the rules they were to observe.

There is no mode of explaining such an omission, except by concluding that the apostles and their attendants were *supernaturally* restrained from drawing up any such canons, liturgies, or creeds. And this conclusion is confirmed by the fact, that soon *after* the age of inspiration, and when men were left to act on their own judgment, they did draw up such Formularies, several of which have come down to us. We have, therefore, in this omission a *Monument* of a Miracle. The Christian Scriptures are in themselves a proof of their having been composed under superhuman guidance; since they do not contain what we may be sure they would have contained, had the writers been left to themselves. Every argument against the human origin of the Christian Scriptures is an argument in favour of their divine origin.

And the argument is complete, even though we should be quite unable to perceive the reasons for this ordinance of Providence; but it is not difficult to discern the superhuman wisdom of the course adopted. We may be sure that, had the Apostles or their attendants recorded the particulars of their own worship, their forms of prayer, and their ecclesiastical regulations, these would all have been regarded as parts of Scripture: and even had they been accompanied by the most express declaration of the lawfulness of altering or laying aside any of them, they would have been, in practice, most scrupulously retained, however inappropriate through

changes of manners, tastes, and local and temporary circumstances, they might have become. The Jewish ritual, designed for one Nation and Country, and intended to be of temporary duration, was fixed and accurately prescribed: the same Divine Wisdom from which both dispensations proceeded, having designed Christianity for all nations and ages, left these points to be determined according to the *principles* which had been distinctly laid down by divine authority; while the *application* of those principles in particular cases was left (as is the case with our moral conduct also) to the responsible judgment of Man.

With regard to catechisms, again, nearly the same reasons will hold good. For though the Christian religion is fundamentally "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," yet as it is impossible that any one mode of introducing its truths can be universally appropriate, they would have been like precise directions for the cultivation of some plant, admirably adapted to some particular soil and climate, but inapplicable in those of a contrary description. And as to Creeds or Confessions of faith, these are (not as some regard them, summaries of the most intrinsically important points of Christian doctrine, but) such compendiums as, standing opposed to the particular heresies in each age and country respectively, serve to test the professed orthodoxy of those who adopt them. And, therefore, had the apostles left Creeds or Symbols, they would have stood, like ancient sea-walls, built to repel the encroachments of the waves, and still scrupulously kept in repair, when perhaps the sea had retired from them many miles, and was encroaching on some different part of the coast.

But supposing such a summary of Gospel truths had been drawn up and contrived with such exquisite skill as to be sufficient and well adapted for all, of every age and country,

what would have been the result of its being provided in Scripture? Both would have been regarded, indeed, as of divine authority; but the Compendium, as the fused and purified metal, the other as the mine containing the crude ore. And the Compendium itself, being not, like the existing Scriptures, that *from which* the faith is to be learned, but *the very thing to be learned*, would have rendered needless the laborious searching of the rest of Scripture to ascertain its agreement with a human exposition of the faith; and, consequently, would have left no room for that excitement of the best feelings, and that improvement of the heart, which are the natural, and doubtless the designed result of an humble, diligent, and sincere study of the Christian Scriptures; and without which our orthodoxy would be, as it were, petrified, like the bodies of those animals we read of incrusted in the ice of the polar regions; firm-fixed, indeed, and preserved unchangeable, but cold, motionless, lifeless.

Proofs of any doctrine, obtained by a bringing together of passages from different, and apparently unconnected, parts of the sacred Volume, are far more important towards conviction than those derived from a single direct statement. Occasionally, one text affording the strongest confirmation of a doctrine, had no force at all in that respect until compared with another, and that perhaps with a third, each separately incapable of bearing upon the point in question, but all, together, composing an indissoluble argument, of so much the more force, indeed, as it precludes the possibility of having been inserted by human design. The proofs from a single text may be compared to a piece of precious ore found on the surface of the ground, which we cannot be sure might not have been dropped by some chance traveller; the other kind of proof, to the same ore dug with labour from a mine,

which is, we may be confident, derived from the place where we found it.

An instance of complex proof of doctrines from the collation of scattered texts of Scripture might be the comparison of the following passages: "All Scripture," says St. Paul to Timothy, "is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16), and is "able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus;" "of which salvation," says St. Peter (1 Peter i. 10), "the prophets have enquired and searched diligently—searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify — unto whom it was revealed, that unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;" and in this the apostle confirms the promises in St.John's Gospel (John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13); whilst in another Epistle he declares the inspiration of the old prophets also to have proceeded from the Holy Ghost; "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21). It is only in combination with each other, that these passages throw light upon the inspiration of both the Old and New Testaments by the same Supreme Being; and attest, at the same time, the unity of the three persons in the Divine nature.

How admirable do the provisions of Divine Wisdom appear, even from the slight and indistinct views we obtain of it! It has supplied to us, by revelation, the knowledge of what we could not have discovered for ourselves: and it has left us to ourselves, precisely in those points in which it is best for us that we should be so left.

The division into chapters and verses, which were introduced, merely for the convenience of reference, many hundred years after the sacred Books were written, are by some persons ignorantly supposed to be, like the chapters in modern books, the work of the authors themselves. And even those who do not fall into this mistake, are led, by their habit of attending to those divisions, unconsciously to separate in their minds passages which, in sense, are closely connected; and thus to break up, as it were, the sacred books into disjointed fragments, so as to obscure, and often pervert, the meaning of the writers. One instance, among many, is the disjoining of the four last verses of the nineteenth chapter of Matthew from the first sixteen verses of the twentieth.

A regular paraphrase of Scripture expands every passage, easy or hard, nearly to the same degree: it applies a magnifying glass of equal power to the gnat and to the camel.

Of the sacred Writers, no two write precisely alike. Though all of them Jews, though all taught one and the same Gospel, by one and the same Spirit, yet the variations of *individual* character are perceptible, even when in national character they all agree.

It was requisite for the propagation of the Gospel in its purity, and for the edification of the infant Church, that the Holy Spirit should "lead the apostles into all (the) truth," and should pour out other supernatural gifts on other Christians; so far therefore did his influence extend. But it was not necessary that all distinction of character among Christians should be done away, where these peculiarities had no evil in them; or that similar spiritual gifts should be bestowed on all. Our religion was designed to renew indeed and amelio-

rate, but not to subvert, our nature, — to amend mankind in general, but not to contradict the essential principles of the human character, — to exalt and purify each individual, but not to destroy his individuality. Here, therefore, the diversity was both permitted, and even augmented. This divine work may be compared to that which took place "in the beginning;" "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very *good;*" but all things were not made *alike;* the *variety* in the creation is infinite.

The man who did not like details of the things that concerned his friends might be a philanthropist, but could hardly have private attachmments. The Gospel records meet this feeling of our nature, being not merely historical, but strictly biographical. Brief as they are, they are fitted to introduce us personally to Him who called his disciples his "friends."

He who is disposed to think that this or that transaction which we find in the Gospels, is not of sufficient consequence to deserve a very attentive study, should recollect that every one we do find there is one out of a thousand—is selected by the writer, as being peculiarly striking, out of all that was said and done, during the short but most momentous period of our Lord's life on earth. We are to consider, not merely why such and such an occurrence *took place*, but why it was *selected*, in preference to a hundred others that were passed by.

Our Lord's miracles may be said to be *acted parables;* for not only are they designed to answer their first and most important purpose, the proof of his divine authority, and the other purpose of the immediate relief of suffering, but they also conveyed some figurative representation of his character

and office, an exhibition of some emblem or token of the Gospel and its effects.

An interpretation of *actions* as symbolical, that is, as conveying an instructive meaning, is (in Scripture) so far from being a fanciful departure from the plain literal sense of what we find there, that it is in fact, *keeping to the established meaning* of the language ordinarily employed by the sacred writers. To speak by significant *actions*, may be called a part of the language of the prophets and other sacred writers, with which, of course, the Jews were familiar. For instance, the mode of conveying the prophecy to Jeroboam; and the prophesying of Jeremiah and Ezekiel during the greater part of their lives more by symbolical actions than by words. Thus, also, Jesus teaches his disciples humility, by placing a little child in the midst of them, and by washing their feet; and most of his miracles are explained by Him, as having an instructive meaning.

The miracle at the marriage at Cana had, as from being the *first* miracle performed by our Lord, it might be expected to have, a more extensive and important signification than any of the rest; — was not merely, like the rest, significant of some *particular* doctrine, but *generally* expressive of His *whole* Gospel,— of the great object of His coming into the world.

To perceive the symbolical character of the opening miracle of our Lord, its circumstances (remarkable, were it only for the minute details thought worthy of being recorded by writers who are, on the whole, so scanty and concise), must be attentively considered, together with several other circumstances in the life and death of Jesus, and in the ex-

pression used by Himself and His Apostles relative to these events.

It is to be observed that the water which our Lord converted into wine, was put, by his command, into those water-pots, which were designed for the purpose of ceremonial purification by washing, according to the rites of the Jewish religion: which rites, the Apostle Paul, when contrasting them with the real and efficacious purification through the sacrifice of Christ, calls "carnal ordinances." As Jesus might as easily, after having directed the servants to bring water in their other vessels, have converted *that*, at once, into wine, and sent it to the governor of the feast, he doubtless adopted this particular mode of performing the miracle, to indicate that He was come to *substitute the Gospel for the law*,—to do away the Old Dispensation of outward ceremonial cleansings, and to put in their place the true atonement and expiation of his great sacrifice which "taketh away the sins of the world." For, as the water which was placed in vessels intended for purification, was aptly chosen by Him to represent the whole of the ceremonial law, so it is to be observed in the next place, that wine, into which the water was changed, represented the blood of Christ, being the symbol of it which He Himself appointed at the last supper; saying, "Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many." And again, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;" signifying by this, as he tells us, his *life*, which he offered up for the redemption of the world. "For the *blood*," says Moses, "is the *life*, and I have given it upon the altar to be an atonement for your souls;" that is, for your lives; the blood being the symbol of life. And thus too Paul, "The cup which we bless, is it not the communion" (that is, joint participation) "of the blood of Christ?" The allusions, accordingly, in the writers of the New Testament,

to the purifying and sanctifying influence of the blood of Christ, on all who have a lively faith in Him, are innumerable. Peter addresses Christians as "elect, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and *sprinkling* of the blood of Jesus Christ." "If we walk in the light," says John, "we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." And the same Apostle was told, concerning the blessed whom he saw in his vision clothed in white robes, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

II. Jesus did not (as he might have done) cause wine to appear in vessels which were *empty*, nor direct that the water should be cast away, and then replenish the vessels with wine; but He *changed* the water into wine; thus indicating that He "came not (as He Himself tells us) "to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them." He did not *cast away* and abolish, as something evil in itself, or wanting in divine authority, the system of Jewish rites and sacrifices; but He *changed* them for that which they signified, and foreshowed,—even the Gospel. He substitutes the substance for the shadow, and brought the types to an end by putting in their stead the thing typified; "the blood," as Paul expresses it, "of the *everlasting* covenant," that is, of that which was not, like the Mosaic, to come to an end, and be superseded by another, but was to last for ever. And since "the law," as Paul says, "is holy and just, and good," it was fitting that what was chosen to represent it should not be anything of a vile or impure nature, though it were changed, —and changed for something more precious. Accordingly, the water on which Christ wrought this miraculous change, is a thing clear indeed, and pure and refreshing, but was converted into wine, which is invigorating and refreshing,

and which was therefore ordained by our Lord as a token, a pledge, and a means of receiving the spiritual benefit of his sacrifice. Whenever, therefore, we see the sacramental cup filled for us in commemoration of Christ's death, and according to his holy Institution, we should remember that He deigned to sanctify that fruit of the vine, not only in the last (before He suffered), but in the *first* remarkable manifestation of Himself to his Disciples; and that he who once changed the water into wine, literally, is able and is ready now, by an inward and spiritual working of the same divine power, to change the outward sign of partaking of the cup, into the partaking of his atoning sacrifice, and receiving of His Holy Spirit into our souls, of which spirit his flesh and blood are themselves the sign; for "it is the Spirit," says He "that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing."

III. The introduction of a change of the Mosaic Law for something far more excellent, was not only unexpected by the Jews (notwithstanding the express declarations of their Prophets) but unacceptable and matter of offence to them. This circumstance, therefore, — the reservation of the more glorious dispensation for the time of the Lord's own coming, —was not left unnoticed among the significant circumstances which accompanied this remarkable miracle. It was intimated in the mystical meaning of the words of the governor of the feast (not understood by himself) when, expressing his surprise, he says, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast *kept the good wine until now.*"

IV. It is to be observed, that the symbols of both our Lord's Sacraments were present on the occasion of this his first miracle, — water, by which He himself had just before been baptized, and which He chose as the emblem of the spiritual cleansing, and purifying efficacy of the Holy Spirit

(as was indicated by the visible appearance of the Spirit descending on Him on that occasion), and *wine*, the appointed emblem of his blood; and into *which* the water was changed, to point out that it is through his sacrifice that we are made partakers of the spiritual purification which Baptism denotes.

V. Again, there are in the Sacred Writers perpetual allusions to the union between Christ and the Church (of which He is the Head), under the figure of a marriage; to denote the affectionate regard which He bears towards this his spouse, his watchful protection and constant presence with her ("lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"), and also the spotless purity and devoted love which He looks for from her. In many of his parables, He alludes to Himself under the character of a Bridegroom; and often describes the Kingdom of Heaven by the parable of a wedding feast. And as there can be no doubt, I think, that in so doing He alluded to this His mystical union with the Church, which was afterwards to be, by His Apostles, so strongly dwelt upon, and set forth, under that figure; so it is more than probable that our Lord had in view when He chose a marriage-feast for the scene of this most significant miracle, His own marriage with the Church, which He "purchased for Himself," and sanctified with his own blood; with whom, hereafter, in her glorified and triumphant state in heaven, He will celebrate anew his mystical union, according to the vision seen by John in the Revelations (the very apostle who records the marriage at Cana); "Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready; and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb."

The Law and the Gospel, like the flower and the fruit of a plant, *correspond* in almost every point, but coincide in very few.

Many are the points in which "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ;" and many an error prevailing among Christians might be cured, if they would but diligently listen to the voice of this schoolmaster, and profit by the lessons, which the Old Testament, if rightly understood, is capable of affording.

It appears to have been part of the design of the Mosaic dispensation to exhibit to mankind a sensible specimen, or rather *representation*, by way of proof, of that moral government of God, the system of which is but imperfectly displayed in the world at large; and which is to be completed, and fully realized, only in a future state. Without entering into a full explanation and defence of this hypothesis, let it be allowed to adopt for the present the supposition, merely *as* a *supposition*, that the Mosaic dispensation was, in part, designed for the purpose just mentioned; that we may examine how far the peculiar circumstances of that dispensation correspond with, and are explained by, it. 1. It would manifestly be necessary then, with a view to the object in question, that the Israelites should be exhibited as *uniformly and regularly* rewarded or punished, according to their obedience or disobedience to the divine commands. 2. And moreover, in order that the correspondence of their situation with their conduct might be more *conspicuously* displayed, it was necessary that they should be *nationally* as well as individually prosperous or unfortunate, in consequence of their good or ill conduct; since the fate of individuals would have been too *obscure* to engage general attention. 3. It was

requisite, for the same reason, that the obedience required of them should not consist in *moral rectitude* alone; because in that case the correspondence of their circumstances to their behaviour would not have been sufficiently *manifest*. For moral virtue consists, chiefly, in purity of motives, and propriety of inward feelings; concerning which other men cannot with any certainty form a judgment. It was requisite, therefore, that their obedience should be tried in the practice of *external* rites, and in a conformity to certain *positive ordinances*. For these observances, though originally matters of indifference, assume a moral character, and become duties when enjoined by divine authority; and the obedience or disobedience of a People on such points, is a matter open to general observation, and one which no one would be liable to mistake. 4. Lastly, with the same view, it was no less requisite that the rewards and punishments also, which should be the sanction of such a law, should be of a nature no less palpable, and open to general observation; and should therefore not consist in anything inward and invisible, as in peace of mind, and in horrors of conscience; nor in the hopes and fears of a future state; but in the immediate and conspicuous distribution of outward worldly prosperity and adversity.

The close correspondence, in all points, of the dispensation actually given, with the foregoing description, is no slight presumption that the object of that dispensation was, in part at least, such as I have supposed, viz., to exhibit to mankind, (to those, that is, who should be, in early times, neighbours to the Israelites, or have any intercourse with them, and subsequently to us, and to all others who should read their history, and view their present fate,) to exhibit, I say, a striking picture of God's moral government,—to convince all men of his superintending providence,—and to instruct them

in the principles of justice, by which his dealings with them will be regulated.

Nor is it any valid objection to the explanation here offered, to say, that the national blessings and national chastisements sent upon the Israelites, as a people, independent of what was enjoyed or suffered by individuals, could be no *instance* of the divine administration of *justice;* inasmuch as a *nation*, considered as a nation, is no real personal agent, nor capable of reward or punishment. For though it cannot properly be said to afford an *instance* or *example* of God's moral government, it may nevertheless serve equally well to furnish a *figure and representation* of that government for our instruction, which is the object we have been supposing designed. Its not being really a distinct *Being*, does not render it the less fit for that purpose; since men are able to form a distinct *conception* of it; which is all that is requisite. A sufficient knowledge respecting a country may be obtained from a map, although that consists of paper and ink, and the other of land and water.

In fact there are, throughout the Mosaic law, innumerable cases in which representations or *figures* are given of the divine justice which cannot be regarded as themselves instances of it. There are for example many occasions on which beasts are commanded to be put to death, as if criminal; as when a beast approached the holy mountain, or occasioned the death of any man; not that a brute can be supposed a moral agent, and in itself a fit object of divine punishment; but yet the lessons of justice, of reverential piety, and of purity, which were by this means conveyed, were not the less intelligible. Thus a lamb without bodily blemish could have no real and intrinsic merit in the sight of God, but the sacrifice of this represented the meritorious sacrifice of Christ. The same remark applies to the other

types, figures, representations, in the Jewish ritual, of the various parts of that more perfect and final dispensation, whereof we enjoy the reality.

So far were Christian ministers from being instructed by their divine Monitor to keep the Old Testament out of sight, that there is no point more strenuously and uniformly insisted on, than the connexion of the Old and New Dispensations. Even in those places in which the great majority of the Christian brethren being converted Gentiles, it might have been supposed that the Old Testament would have been but little studied or thought of, Paul was so far from allowing the Jewish Scriptures to be depreciated, that he seems to have expected in all his converts, an intimate acquaintance with the Old Testament; and to have earnestly, and not unsuccessfully, inculcated the necessity of interpreting the one scheme by the other, as two parts of one great whole, and of considering "whatsoever things were written aforetime as written for their learning." And the frequent *allusions* he makes to them as *familiar* to his hearers, and of acknowledged value in their eyes, convey his judgment on the subject far more strongly than so many direct admonitions; they indicate what was the early, the habitual, and the universal mode of instruction employed by himself and all the Christian teachers. No Christian, therefore, who would copy the pattern of this inspired teacher will leave the Old Testament out of sight; but will learn from him that the former dispensation must be carefully attended to by one who would rightly understand the Gospel.

He who studies, and leads others to study, the whole Word of God, as his inspired servants have left it, has at least good reason to hope, that he and they *may*, through God's spirit,

attain truth without error; whereas he who confines himself to a part of the Scriptures, is *sure* to be wrong, and to lead others wrong if they are guided by him.

An ambiguity in the word "Gospel," is deserving of notice, as it has been the source of much evil in leading to the neglect of the apostolic epistles. The word, which signifies according to its etymology, as well as the Greek term of which it is a translation, "good tidings," and is thence applied especially to the joyful intelligence of salvation for fallen man through Christ, has come to be applied, naturally enough, to each of the histories of the life of Him, the Author of that salvation. Hence men are frequently led to seek exclusively, or principally, in those histories for an account of the *doctrines* of the Christian religion; for where should they look, they may say, for "Gospel-truth," but in the "Gospels?" And because it is said that our Lord preached the *Gospel*, many are led to look to *his discourses* alone, or principally, as the store-house of divine truth to the neglect of the other Scriptures of the New Testament. But "the Gospel of the Kingdom" which He preached was, that the "Kingdom of Heaven was *at hand*," not that it was actually established, which *was* the Gospel preached by his Apostles, when Christ "having been made perfect through sufferings," having laid the keystone of the Gospel scheme of salvation, in his meritorious sacrifice, as an atonement for sin, and his resurrection from the dead, had entered into his Kingdom—had "ascended on high, and led captive" the Oppressor of men, and had "received gifts" to bestow upon them. Our Lord's discourses, therefore, while on earth — though they teach, of course, the truth—do not teach, nor could have been meant to teach, the *whole* truth as afterwards revealed to his disciples. They could not, indeed, even consistently with

truth, have contained the main part of what the apostles preached, because that was chiefly founded on events which had not then taken place. He did indeed hint at these events in his discourses to his disciples, and to them alone, by way of prophecy; but we are told that "the saying was hid from them, and they comprehended it not, till after that Christ was risen from the dead." Had our Lord's discourses contained a full account of the Christian faith, there would have been no need of his saying, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all (the) truth." And when, through inspiration from on high, the apostles *did* understand the Gospel, the true character of the redemption, and of the faith by which we must partake of it, they taught its doctrines in their discourses and in their epistles. Our chief source of instruction, then, must be in the Apostolic Epistles. They contain all the doctrines of the Gospel, as far as they have been revealed to men; furnishing us with the means, by a careful and diligent study of those precious remains, of attaining sufficient knowledge of all necessary truth, and of becoming "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

To confine attention to the four gospels, as containing all important truth, and to neglect or explain away the remainder of the New Testament, is to act like one who should destroy and reject as spurious excrescence every part of the fruit of a tree which was not fully developed in the blossom that preceded it.

The most precious part of the treasure of Christian doctrine contained in the epistles we have from the pen of the apostle Paul. Those who prize the purity of the Gospel should value

his writings the more, as there is no one of the Sacred Writers whose expressions have been so tortured, whose authority has been set so much at naught as Paul's, by those who reject many of the most characteristic doctrines of the Gospel; which is a plain proof that they find him a formidable opponent; not, indeed, as the only authority for these great truths, but as particularly full and clear in enforcing them. The Mahometans who acknowledge the authority of the four Gospels, though they pretend the Christians have interpolated them, hold the name of Paul in detestation. And besides the especial hatred of his writings by infidels, and by some description of heretics, no part of the Scriptures of the New Testament has been so unjustly neglected by some Christians, and so much perverted by others.

There is good reason to believe that the objection to Paul's writings is not from the "things *hard* to be understood" which they contain, but from the things *easy* to be understood, the doctrines so plainly taught by him that "by grace we are saved;" that "the *wages* of sin is death, but eternal life is the *gift* of God through Jesus Christ;" that our most perfect righteousness can never enable us to claim reward at the hand of God, nor our own unaided strength enable us to practise that righteousness; but that the meritorious sacrifice of Christ is the only foundation of the Christian's hope; and the aid of his Spirit, the only support of the Christian's virtue. It is on account of these doctrines that Paul's writings are objected to, because they are humbling to the pride of the human heart, and therefore unacceptable to the natural man.

There appears to be a very remarkable analogy between the treatment to which Paul was himself exposed during his

personal ministry on earth, and that which his writings have met with since. In both he stands distinguished in many points among the preachers of the Gospel; and it is possible that this distinction may in some way be connected with the peculiar manner in which he became one of that number. The same Apostle who had been originally so bitter a persecutor of the Christians, was exposed after his conversion, to a greater variety of afflictions in the gospel-cause than any of the others.

It is not unlikely that his Lord *designed* thus to place him foremost in fight, thus to assign to him, both the most hazardous and also the most harassing and distressing offices in the Christian ministry, on account of his having once been a blasphemer and persecutor. Not as a punishment, or again that he might atone and make compensation for his former sin (which no man can do); but that he might have an opportunity of completely retracing his steps, and of feeling that he did so; that he might display a zeal, and firmness, and patience, and perseverance, above all the rest, in the cause which he had once oppressed; that by having his own injurious treatment of Christians continually brought to his mind by what he himself endured, he might the more deeply and deliberately humble himself before God for it; that he might find room to exercise in his dealings with unbelievers, all that full knowledge of the perverse prejudices of the human mind, with which his own memory would furnish him by reflecting on his own case; and, finally, that both he and the other Apostles might feel that he was placed fully on a level with them, notwithstanding his former opposition to the cause; by enduring and accomplishing in it more than all the rest, by suffering more than he had ever inflicted, by forwarding the cause of Truth more than he had ever hindered it, and by bearing with him this pledge that God

had fully pardoned him, the pledge of his being counted worthy not only to suffer in his Master's cause, but to suffer more than any other, and with greater effect.

He who had been accessory to the stoning of Stephen, himself, alone of Apostles, as far as we know, suffered stoning; he who had been so zealous in behalf of the law of Moses, was destined to encounter not only unbelieving Jews, but those Christians also who laboured to corrupt Christianity by mixing the law of Moses with it; he who had been, as he expresses it, "exceedingly mad against the disciples, and persecuted them even unto strange cities," was himself driven from city to city by enemies whose fury knew no bounds, both of his own countrymen, and of the senseless rabble of idolaters, who assailed him like "wild beasts at Ephesus." He who had misinterpreted the ancient prophecies respecting the Messiah, and despised his disciples, had to endure not only the contradiction and derision of unbelievers, but also the wilfulness and perversity of "false brethren," who misrepresented and distorted the doctrines he himself taught, and of arrogant rivals who strove to bring him into disrepute with those who had learnt the faith from him. In all these struggles, he was "more than conqueror, through Christ that strengthened" him.

Still may Paul be said to stand in his works, as he did in person while on earth, in the front of the battle; to bear the chief brunt of assailants from the enemies' side, and to be treacherously stabbed by false friends on his own. And still do his works stand, and will ever stand, as a mighty bulwark of the true Christian faith. He, after having himself "fought the good fight, and finished his course," has left behind him a monument in his works, whereby, "he being dead, yet speaketh;" — a monument which his Master

will guard (even till that day when its author shall receive the "crown of righteousness laid up for him") from being overthrown by the assaults of enemies, and from mouldering into decay through the negligence of friends. His labours can never be effectually frustrated except by being kept out of sight. Whatever brings him into notice will, ultimately, bring him into triumph. All the malignity and the sophistry of his adversaries will not only assail him in vain, but will lead in the end to the perfecting of his glory, and the extension of his Gospel. They may scourge him uncondemned, like the Roman magistrates at Philippi; they may inflict on him the lashes of calumnious censure, but they cannot silence him; they may thrust him, as it were, into a dungeon, and fetter him with their strained interpretations, but his voice will be raised even at the midnight of unchristian darkness, and will be heard effectually; his prison-doors will burst open as with an earthquake, and the fetters will fall from his hands; and even strangers to Gospel-truth will fall down at the feet of him — even Paul, to make that momentous enquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?"

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